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BANTABA: DESIGNING THE SACRED CIRCLE

CELEBRATING THE DRUM AS THE APEX OF
WEST AFRICAN DIASPORIC DANCE

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A thesis/dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University





This project explores designing an interior space that supports West African and African Diasporic dance forms. The space will offer community dance and drumming classes, host performances in a flexible multipurpose space that converts to performance space, and offer education about West Africa through exhibits integrated throughout the space. The space will serve as a community builder and connection to ancestral roots for Richmond’s African American and Jackson Ward communities.

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ABSTRACT



MOTIVATION

In Richmond, there are 1.21 times as many African Americans as any other ethnic group. Yet 63.4% of African Americans live in poverty (Richmond, VA). African Americans face greater exposure to stress due to low socioeconomic status and poverty. In these communities, “discrimination and deprivation undermine individuals’ ability to accumulate the social and material resources to mitigate the effects of stress” (Brondolo, 2018). In this city’s African American community, where stress levels are high and consequential health concerns are prevalent, dance can be a remedy for managing stress and improving health (Hanna, 2006).

DESIGN PROBLEM

How can an intentionally designed interior environment support dance as a remedy for stress and its negative health effects? How can the design of this environment celebrate the culture of the African American community?

METHODS

Literature reviews on the relationship between space and dance will help inform design decisions. Studies of programmatic precedents will focus on spaces involving dance, healing, community engagement and cultural specificity. Studies of conceptual precedents that involve movement, rhythm and the body will take place. Rudolf Laban’s notation system for studying movement in dance will be utilized to analyze the movements required of African dance, resulting in a more targeted design approach. A dancer with a background in African dance will serve as a research advisor. Interviews of African American dancers will be conducted to gain insight into the practice of dance and the needs of a dance space.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Research shows that dance reduces stress levels. Specifically, African dance, significantly decreases perceived stress and repeated practice can lead to overall stress reduction (West, J. et al). African dance’s main purpose is to serve as an expression of the physical and psychological states of individuals, allowing for emotional release.(Welsh-Asante, 1996). Dance can be used to cope with stress by discharging repressed aggression, improving self-esteem and allowing for self expression . Dance also prevents stress through physical exercise (Hanna, 2006). Additionally, research from Steven Holl, Santiago Calatrava and other architectural masters discuss the relationships between dance and architecture.

CONCLUSION

The research will inform the design of a cultural dance center for the city’s historically African American neighborhood. The interior design of this center will support African dance and culture, foster creativity, and encourage stress reduction. The design will also support the secondary programs of dance movement therapy, seminars, celebrations, community outreach, educational programs, and exhibitions.

RESEARCH WRITING



In a society that is more sedentary than ever and where face to face communication is at an all-time low, it is more important than ever to get moving and create community with others.

More specifically, within the African American community, a panoply of adversary conditions, and a unique exposure to social, economic and environmental, stressors, negatively impact the health of individuals and the community. What if there was a place that supported physical activity and a connection to history and culture, as one way to alleviate these problems? With dance being Africa's most culturally pervasive physical activity, what if there was a dedicated and intentionally designed interior space for African diaspora dance, culture and community programming? Through design, this project provides an answer.

In America, sedentary behavior and physical inactivity are major health issues.

In general, the United States has seen a recent focus on health improvement. In December 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services launched Healthy People 2020. The program has four overarching goals: "Attain high-quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death; Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups; Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all; and Promote quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages" (National Center for Health Statistics, 2011). This recent focus on health improvement is a result of recent health statistics.

One major health problem that exists in our country is the lack of physical activity. Sedentary behavior is a serious public health issue; In fact, inactivity has similar outcomes as smoking. Currently, 80% of adults in the United States don't meet the national

guidelines, created in 2008, set by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion for aerobic and muscle strengthening activities. These guidelines state that physical activity is a key component in improving overall health and regular activity reduces the risks of many adverse health outcomes. They assert that a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity a week is necessary for health benefits (Healthy People 2020 Physical Activity Guidelines).

Physical inactivity is a primary cause of most chronic diseases. Physical activity prevents, or delays, chronic diseases, implying that chronic disease need not be an inevitable outcome during life (Booth, et. al, 2012). If inactivity could be reduced by 10%, 533,000 deaths could be averted each year and if reduced by 25% the estimate was that more than 1.3 million deaths could be avoided (Lack of exercise as 'deadly' as smoking, 2012).

In addition to sedentary behavior and physical inactivity, African Americans face a complex set of issues that negatively impact health.

Many of the adverse health outcomes and chronic diseases occur in larger percentages in the African American community. In its Health Disparities and Inequalities Report, the CDC reported persistent health disparities in many areas regarding African Americans, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes (Health Equity in Richmond, Virginia, 2016).

In Virginia, the current adult hypertension rate (2017) is 32.4%, ranking us 24/50 of states (The State of Obesity, n.d.)The prevalence of high blood pressure in African Americans is the highest in the world, in fact. This disease increases risks of heart disease and stroke. While high blood pressure tends to be genetic, it can be controlled. A few of the lifestyle changes the American Heart Association recommends are: enjoying

physical activity, managing stress, and maintaining a healthy weight (“African Americans and Heart Disease, Stroke, 2015”).

Heart disease and stroke account for the largest proportion of inequality in life expectancy between whites and African Americans. In 2009, African Americans in the United States had the highest mortality rates from heart disease and stroke as compared to any other ethnic group (Community Health Assessment Richmond City, 2017). For people with heart disease, exercise can reduce the risk of dying from heart disease and having a heart attack. For people without heart disease, regular exercise can decrease the chance of developing it. Active people with high blood pressure and heart disease are less likely to die prematurely than inactive people with these conditions (Exercise and Heart Disease Statistics, n.d.).

Obesity is on the rise. Obesity rates in Virginia were at 30% in 2017, compared to 11% in 1990 (The State of Obesity, n.d.). Additionally, African Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity. 63% of men and 77% of women 20 years old and older are overweight or obese. Undoubtedly, diet is key in maintaining a healthy weight, but regular physical activity plays a major role in getting pounds off and keeping them off (“African Americans and Heart Disease, Stroke, 2015”).

Lastly, but not conclusively, diabetes plagues the African American community. It is treatable and preventable with lifestyle changes, including regular physical activity. For diabetes and heart disease risks, the key is getting the heart rate up, strengthening the cardiovascular system and burning extra calories (“African Americans and Heart Disease, Stroke”).

In addition to physical activities, stress management plays a significant role in treating and preventing

adverse health outcomes. 62% of adults who say they exercise to help manage stress say the technique is very or extremely effective (Stress and Exercise, n.d.).

Stress is detrimental to health, increasing susceptibility to disease and undermining recovery from illness, and is a predictor of health outcomes. African Americans face greater exposure to physical threats, and are more likely to witness violence or be victims of violent assault. “More than 22% of African Americans live at or below the poverty level, many in communities where discrimination and deprivation undermine their ability to accumulate the social and material resources to reduce threat exposure or to mitigate its effects.” Low socioeconomic status renders people more vulnerable to stress exposure as well (Brondolo, 2018).

People experience stress when they do not have sufficient resources to meet even small demands. In the United States, stress and its consequences are not equitably distributed among racial and ethnic groups, which differ in the demands they face and the resources they can access (Brondolo, 2018).

Where we live can determine opportunities to access high-quality education, employment, housing, fresh foods or outdoor space – all contributors to our health. There is a relationship between social and economic conditions and how they impact health disparities. African-American health is improving, and many of the disparities we see in the chronic diseases are largely preventable. Just being black in America triggers exposure to stressors linked to premature biological aging (Williams, Lavizzo-Mourey, 2016). The health disparities between blacks and whites run deep, no matter the age or ailment. For one example, a study showed that African Americans from ages 18 to 49 age were nearly twice as likely to die from heart disease, stroke and diabetes as whites. This, again, is a consequence of psychosocial, economic and

environmental stressors (Howard, 2017).

In 2016, there were 1.21 times more Black residents (104,831 people) in Richmond city, VA than any other race or ethnicity (Richmond City, VA, n.d.). In addition to national guidelines, Richmond, Virginia in particular has been working recently to focus on physical activity in the city. In 2017, physical activity was identified as an area of focus for Richmond in the Capital Region Collaborative with a strategy to support, expand, and promote programs that offer opportunities for physical activity (Community Health Assessment Richmond City, 2017).

Dance is proven to improve physical health through cardiovascular movement and mental health through physical activity and creative expression.

In Richmond's African American community, where stress levels are high, physical activity is low and consequential health concerns are paramount, dance can be a remedy for managing stress and improving health, as it has historically been proven to decrease stress, improve physical health, and help people cope with trauma (Hanna, 2006). Dance prevents stress cognitively through self expression and physically through exercise. African dance is a form of communication that allows for emotions, sentiments, beliefs and other reactions through movement (Welsh0Asante, 1996). Dance, reactively, can be used to cope with stress by discharging repressed aggression and improving self-esteem. Historically, dance has helped people to reduce, resist and escape stress (Hanna, 1988). There are many ways to release stress, such as yoga, meditation, exercise, writing, etc. But dance, on top of being excellent strengthening and aerobic exercise, allows for a form of self-expression, or release, that aids in stress relief.

Dance has been shown to improve psychological well-being. Dance has received little research attention compared to yoga as a stress-reducer. However, dance can reduce depression, increase moods and relieve pain, such as that caused by arthritis. Humans today despite the advances in medicine, are experiencing chronic diseases that are aggravated by stress at greater rates. In a study on the effects of hatha yoga and African dance on perceived stress and salivary cortisol, African dance significantly decreased perceived stress. It can be concluded from this study that repeated practice of African dance can lead to overall stress reduction (basal cortisol production) over time and contribute to an individual's overall health (West, et. al, 2004).

In West Africa, where many of Richmond's African Americans have ancestral roots, dance is a pervasive and integral part of life.

“Dance is the soul of Africa. It is the foundation of all of the arts and weaves a tale about the daily lives of people (Welsh-Asante, 2010).” Dance in Africa is a pragmatic part of life. It is used to celebrate both everyday events and major life events. African dance can be described as dances that are imbued with meaning, infused purposely with rhythm and connected to rituals (Welsh-Asante, 2010).

Traditionally, in non-western practices, dance has been used to help people deal with pain, trauma, conflict and stress. African dance's main purpose is to serve as cultural and artistic expression for communities. It is an expression of the physical, psychological and spiritual states of individuals and allows for expression of joys, fears, hopes and sorrows. It universally involves repetition with an emphasis on the earth (Welsh-Asante, 1996). In African dance, there is the need to have a firm base on the ground, so movements are

downward, slouched or low to the earth. This is viewed as conveying realism. This form of dance would be culturally relevant, good physical exercise and good stress management.

Connection to dance is also a vital part of contemporary African American culture.

For the African American community, two overarching forms of dance are unique to the culture - African dance and social dance. African dance refers to traditional dance practices that come from African. Social dance are the popular dances that the African American community comes up with, that typically are done in social settings. In today's terms, it would be dances that are trending. These dances and the practice of dancing them reinforce community.

African dance was originally brought to America with African slaves. In the transatlantic slave trade, slaves were mostly brought to America from the following modern-day countries: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea - Bissau, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, The Republic of Congo and Angola. These countries make up what is commonly referred to West Africa (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

Though repressive, slavery was not enough to completely destroy the tradition of African dance. That is exemplary of how ingrained into the African way of life dance truly is. It was the constant influx of slaves that allowed for the ability for some parts of African culture to survive, as there was a constant connection to the motherland. A new culture surrounding dance, in the domain of slavery was established. Dance became a way for slaves to circumvent restrictions. Some slave masters would allow dance to occur, others did not, as slavery was different regionally and affected each regional culture that emerged. Some slave masters took away drums in attempt to kill the

tradition, which reiterates the importance of the drum to dance. (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

Because of slavery, dance meaning changed from sacred to secular. Social and religious community became one in the same, eliminating a separation of sacred and secular dance. Christianity was often practiced, so dance was reserved for social events. African spiritual traditions were demonized, forbidden and eliminated. But African style, fervor, format and predisposition continued (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

What is practiced today is a deviation from what would have been traditional African dances, due to the demand of slaves to practice Christianity and the secularization of what were originally religious dances. Dance forms have also deviated because of the conditions of slavery (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

Ancient and traditional dances provide a foundation for the social dances in African American culture.

African American secular social dance has emerged from the socio-historical African American experience (Welsh-Asante, 1996). "First, take social — a community, coming together for a purpose — then add dance, a sequence of movements. It's an art form that's spanned generations — evolving across centuries, continents, cultures — from the drum-like Juba dance of enslaved Africans to the modern Bop" (Brown, n.d.).

"Social dances bubble up, they change and they spread like wildfire," according to Camille Brown, dancer and researcher. "They are as old as our remembered history. In African American social dances, we see over 200 years of how African and African American traditions influenced our history. The present always contains the past and the past shapes who we are and who we will be." (Brown, 2018)

African-American social dances started as a way for enslaved Africans to keep cultural traditions alive and retain a sense of inner freedom. They remain an affirmation of identity and independence. Dance is a language, and social dance is an expression that emerges from a community. A social dance isn't choreographed by any one person. It can't be traced to any one moment. Now, social dance is about community and connection; if you know the steps, it means you belong to a group. "Social dance is part structure and part individual creativity," Brown said. "It supports your identity. It's telling us who you are. (Benton, 2017)"

There are a panoply of qualities and characteristics that distinguish West African dance from other dance forms.

Across Africa, dance is different and varies across ethnic groups. There are hundreds of thousands of variations. Commonly, dance is influenced by the physical environment and thus, clothing worn (ie; rattles on the hips). Particularly, in West Africa, elements of dance forms include: body segmentation, complex hand, arm and foot movement, facial expressions, miming, pelvic contractions and story-telling that commemorates everyday experiences. Dance is performed commonly, in circular (or cipher or set de flo) and line formations (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

In African American dance, basic muscle memory and movements from West Africa are apparent. These characteristics cut across ethnic distinctions; They are: ephebism, segmentation and delineation of body parts, polyrhythmic sensitivity, angularity, multiple centers of movement, asymmetry as balance, mimetic performance, improvisation, derision and call and response. These are all aesthetic commonalities that continued to govern dance as it became secularized in the West (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

Overall, African dance form can be distinguished by percussiveness and high energy. In artistic expression, what is referred to as a force of vital aliveness, is a critical part of African dance, without this component, it is no longer African dance. In short, African dance is explosive and precise. This ephebism is seen in the speed and drive of the music and movements and in the strength in the dance forms, communicated with intentional, fierce angular movements and patterning that respond to the energetic flow of the drums. The vitality in African dance is also seen in the percussiveness of the music and dance. They are at high intensity with speed, drive and strength. Flexibility and suppleness are also illustrative of vitality. This means that each movement is done with an anticipation of change, which happens by body parts being angular, or bent, and low to the ground, commonly referred to as the get down (Thompson, 1974).

New generations are further removed from indigenous African roots. Post inter-African assimilation, Africans in North America found it difficult to commune in groups to sustain cultural traditions. A unique blend of customs, habits and traits emerged to create the African American cultural complex. (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

The relationship between the dance and the drum in a commonality across many countries and thousands of ethnic groups.

African dance is the art of movement governed by the drums. Its relationship to the music is one thing that distinguishes it from other types of dance. Dance in Africa is diverse, but the one commonality is the relationship to music. "Dance and drumming are synonymous projections with ardent, driving rhythms, pungent complexities of form and consonant articulate

expression.” Drumming is as ancient as the dance. The dance to the drum aesthetic is the apex of African performing arts. The drum is talking to the body and the dancer is talking back to the drum. “If the secret is beat upon the drum, the secret will be revealed in the dance.” (Welsh-Asante, 1996).

“Dance is an expression of time and space, using the control of movement and gesture to communicate (Welsh-Asante, 2010).”

Space and time are the common mediums in which both exercises operate and are therefore the basis for the collaboration. The dancer in space introduces the consideration of time-the movement of the body in space. This reveals a quality that traditional, static proportions and measures can never achieve. The dancer explores all the potential orientations and interactions between space and time. The body is pushed and pulled by the possibilities of its movement in space. Being able to see these possibilities through the dancer, the explorer of space-time, provides another important layer of understanding built space (Nicholas, 2012).

Spaces for dance have been designed by architects for centuries. Relationships between the body and space, studies of movement in spaces and other work has been developed by architects, psychologists, etc for centuries. These designs have primarily focus on architecture.

Architects can learn a great deal from dancers. By looking at architecture through the lens of dance, architects can learn more about how bodies move through space. Dancers are more in tune with their bodies and relate to space differently that a non-dancer would be cause of this understanding. Analyzing architecture’s “choreography” and studying dancers can lead to better understandings of how the body

relates to space (Levash, 2015).

Body-image theory is the feeling that a person carries at any moment in time of his space, values, and experience in her/his body. This theory states that we unconsciously locate our bodies inside a three dimensional boundary. Corporeality is another theory of concept involving the body and space. The most critical role of the body is to understand the relationship between itself and what else exists (corporeality). Reciprocity between places and bodies; if a place is contained, then so must be a body (Bloomer, 1977).

Dancers are spatially aware. They focus on levels, directions and pathways in their bodies and environments. Dancers balance time and energy, using speed and flow, movement qualities and rhythms to create motion. Dancers master the principles of movement by focus, technique, alignment, physical and psychological center, breathing and balance (Minton, 2003).

Dance in indoor spaces is constructed by the physical space. The physical space (construction, dynamics and qualities) contributes to the construction of the dance itself. Choreography and performance disrupt the way a space would typically (or logically) be experienced. Dance and architecture both shape the way the world is perceived. They both organize space. This is defined by the term “logic of visualization (Brigshaw, 2001).”

Steven Holl and Jessica Lange have done work on space as it relates to dance. They affirm that while architecture and dance share concepts in space, lighting and time, architecture survives for a longer period of time contrary to a dance, which disappears moment by moment. According to Steven Holl, the body moving through space and time is the center of both architecture and dance.

Another designer, Santiago Calatrava’s set for the New York City Ballet reveals his understanding of the relationship between the body and space. His work typically involves movement and his architectural designs and sculptures tend to twist and turn and are never static. He’s interested in the human body and uses it as inspiration. Some of the exercises he does regarding this is figurative drawings, watercolor sketches, exercises in form and rhythmic movement, and making his drawings “dance across the page.” Calatrava described his opportunity to design for the New York City Ballet as an opportunity to work with “time-based art forms that contrasts markedly with the enduring elements of architecture (Morris, 2010).”

There is a strong relationship between dance and culture, especially in Africa where dance is arguably the most significant cultural activity.

There is a relationship between dance and culture. Cultural traditions affect both the way architecture is built and sited as well as all streams of art and performing art. Both dance and architecture have deep cultural roots. Architects and dancers can refine/enhance creations by looking at traditions for inspiration and as fuel for advancement. Both architects and dancers manipulate space (Nayak, 2008).

Dancers can be cultural ambassadors, such as Alvin Ailey and Katherine Dunham, leaders of African Diasporic dance). And futher, choreography can be used as a “window for social change,” such as creating body movement that aligns with protest (Kowal, 2010). Therefore, a dance space that situates the African American experience at its center is as much about the individual as it is the community.... (need a sentence to tighten this up)

A space for dance in the African American community may also serve as a cultural center, to weave in culture

with the mission of community health improvement. The objective of a cultural center is to promote cultural values among the members of its community. Its structure is based on broad spaces where different cultural manifestations enrich and liven up the cultural life of the local population. Both museums and cultural centers are non-profitable, permanent cultural institutions, which are opened to the public and in the service of society and its development (Sanders, n.d.).

WEST AFRICAN DIASPORIC DANCE AND INTERIOR DESIGN: AN OPPORTUNITY

Intentional spaces for dance have been given little? architectural focus, as there has been little research done on the interior of dance spaces. Furthermore, there exists little or no research on a dance space, architectural or interior, that focuses specifically on African dance. A designated place for dance and connection to culture could improve the health of the African American community, and build even stronger community in Richmond, a place with a deep African American history. Could a focus on the adaptive reuse and interior design of such a space be impactful?

EMRICK FLATS
101 WEST MARSHALL STREET
RICHMOND, VA



<https://www.apartments.com/marshall-adams-apartments-richmond-va/3qpmvyf/>



<https://www.neighborhoods.com/emrick-flats-richmond-va>



BUILDING HISTORY



It's construction was announced in 1923 and completed in 1925. It was designed to be finest car dealership in Richmond at the time, the Emrick Chevrolet Dealership. The primary construction materials were brick, concrete, steel, and glass.



Conrad Grodd hired architect H.T. Barnham to build one of the largest automotive sales buildings in Richmond, Virginia at the time, according to the March 4, 1924 Richmond Times Dispatch. The building was constructed with three floors and a basement originally as was fully fireproof and carried the lowest insurance rate of any building in the south, according to the architect. It was built to be occupied by Emrick Chevrolet Sales Corporation. The building has 178 feet of plate glass show windows, and the entire exterior of the building was supposed to be windows. The interior had model elevators, dumbwaiters, and traveling cranes. Cars were assembled and disassembled here for show, but it was not a car factory.



Emrick Chevrolet, Richmond, Virginia, 1925.

<https://wparks.com/emrick-flats>

The building is on the triangle of Brook Road, West Marshal and North Adams streets. The building is known by several addresses, 101 West Marshall Street and 310

North Adams Street and 2-12 West Marshall Street. An advertisement in at 1923 Richmond Times Dispatch listed the location of this building as 114 West Broad Street.

The building was frequently referred to as “in the triangle” in Chevrolet advertisements. The triangular shape of the building and its large “showroom windows” are the most stand out features of the building. The building appears to have been added on to as the Marshall Street exterior side varies greatly in design elements and shape. It is now condos, each floor has two to three condos, there is resident parking and a rooftop deck. Its condo renovation was completed by Walter Parks architects and it is owned by a real estate company currently.

The building belongs to the 1920's and is built in commercial industrial style typical in Richmond in the 20th century, with steel and reinforced concrete framing. This style comes from In 1903, architect Albert Kahn. The widespread use of steel and reinforced concrete in the early 20th century brought with it

BUILDING INFORMATION

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TYPE
TYPE I

GROSS AREA
33364 (SQ. FT.)

EFFICIENCY RATIO = 60%

TOTAL NET AREA
20018 (SQ. FT.)

A VISUAL INVENTORY

5 FLOORS



8 STRUCTURAL
COLUMNS



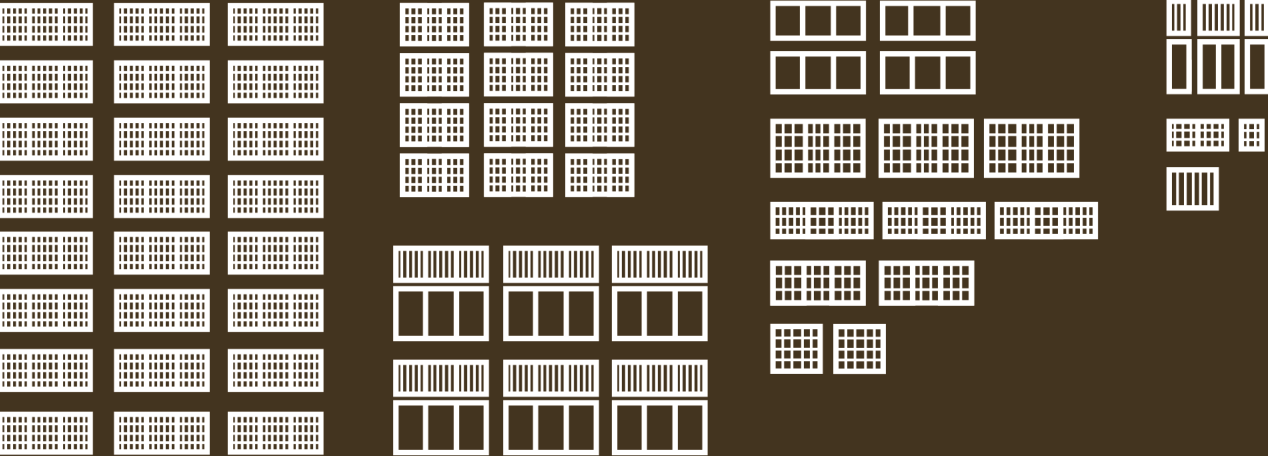
5 EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS



5 ENTRANCES



60 WINDOWS



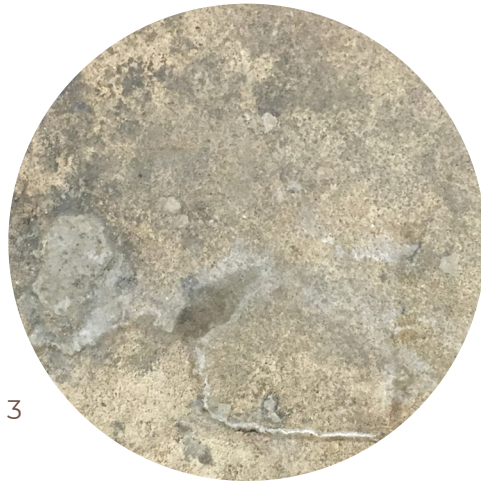
EXISTING MATERIALITY



1



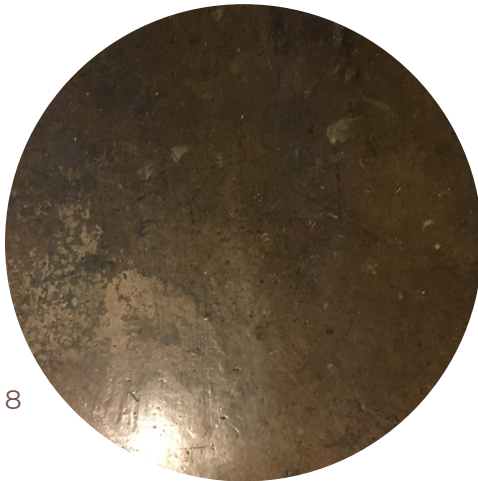
2



3



7



8



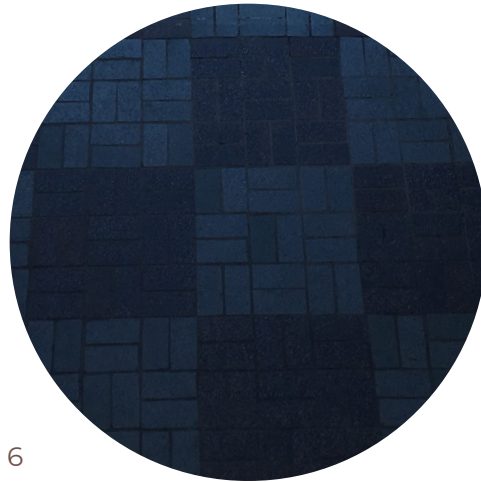
3



4



5



6



4

- 1. Interior Terracotta Brick
- 2. Interior Brick
- 3. Concrete Flooring
- 4. Original Elevator - Wood + Metal
- 5. Exterior Concrete
- 6. Wire Mesh
- 7. Polished Concrete
- 8. Old Logo
- 9. Exterior Tile
- 10. Interior CMU

EXISTING INTERIOR PHOTOS



Main entrance



View from main entrance



Attached parking garage



Windows



Exposed joists and ductwork



Roof



Fifth floor circulation, terracotta brick



Garage entry



Residential entry



Roof access

EXISTING INTERIOR PHOTOS



Residential hallway



Original elevator



Hallway, painted terracotta brick



First floor ceiling, exposed ductwork



Original elevator

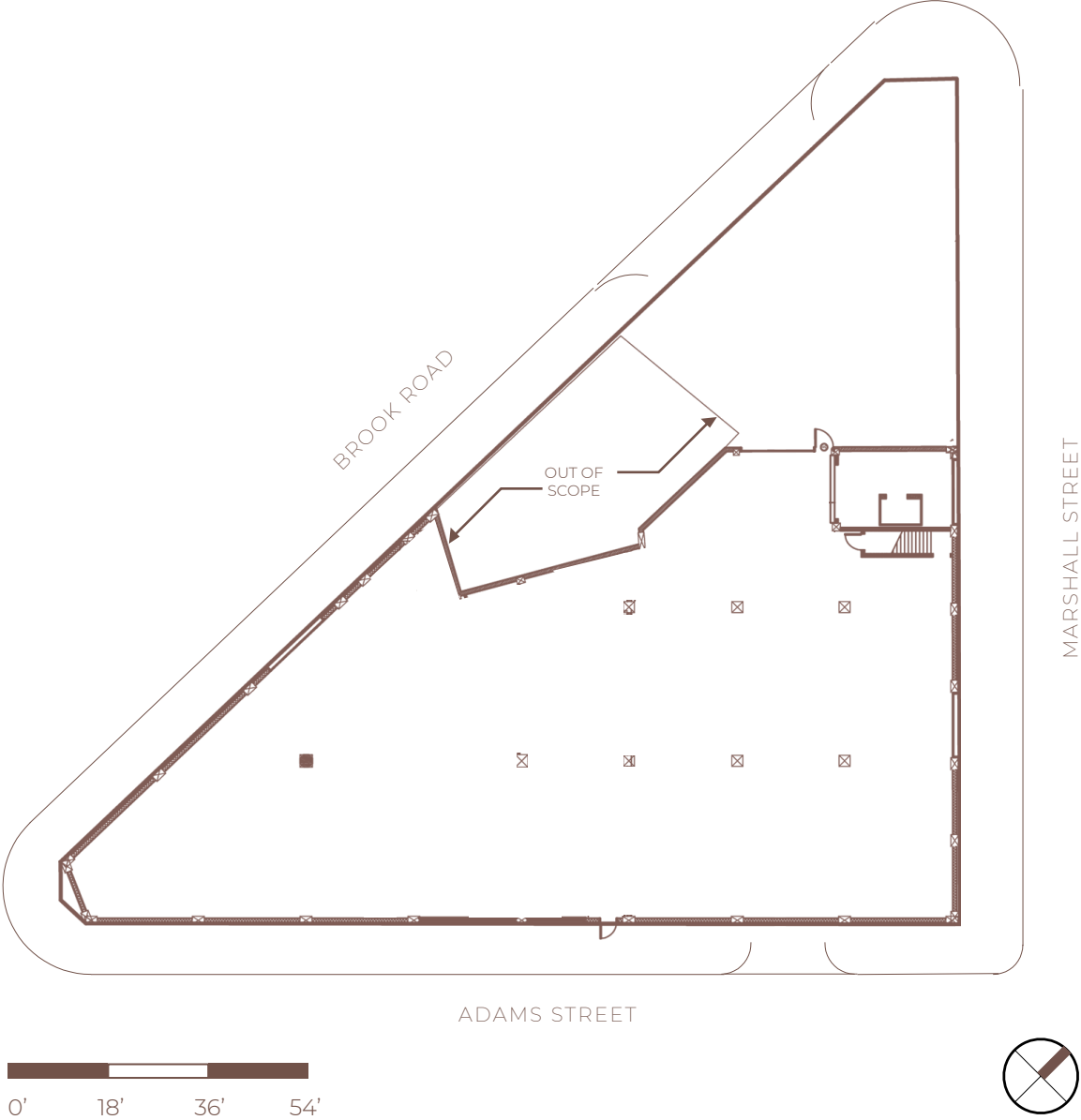


Parking garage entry

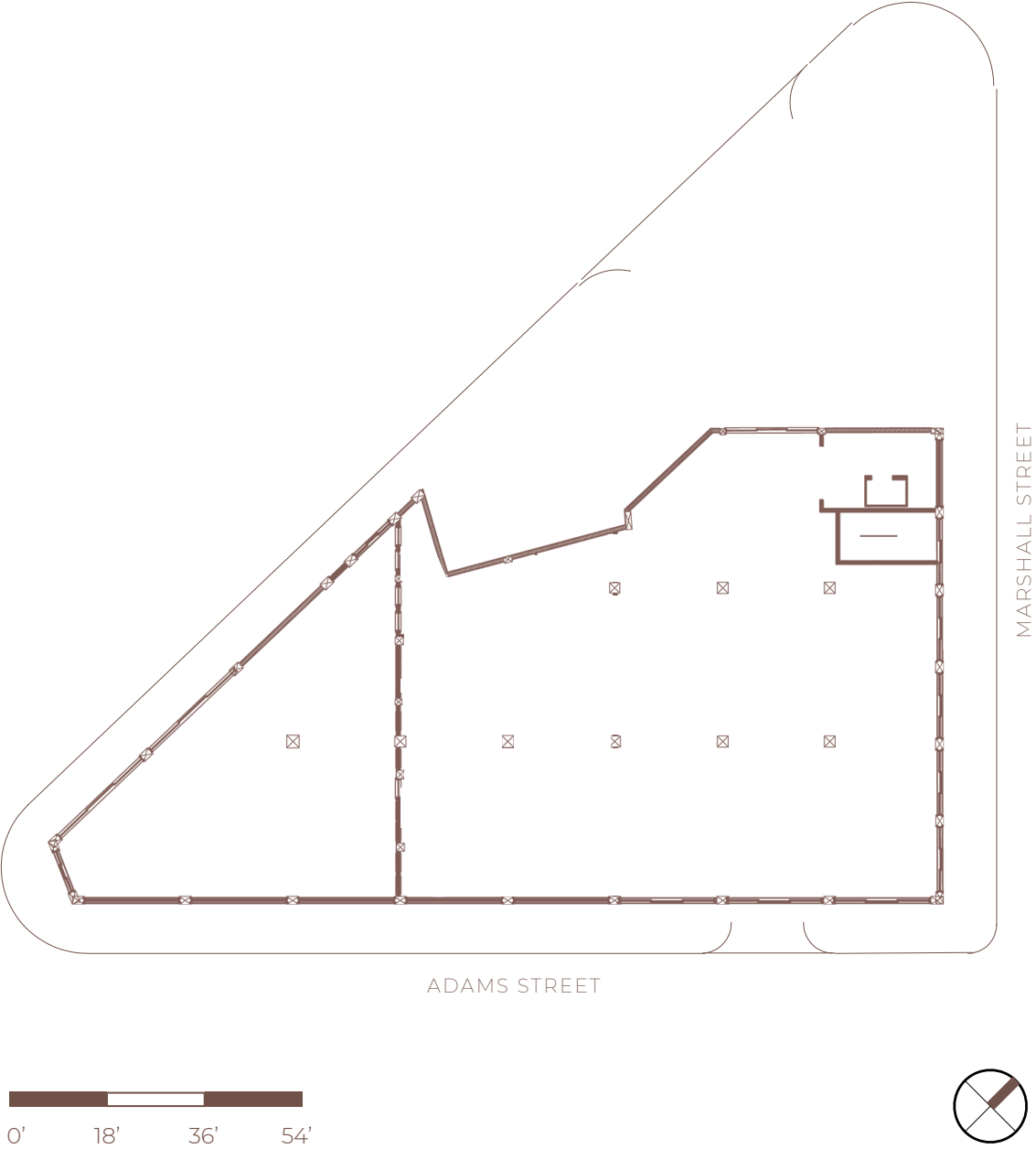
BUILDING ORTHOGRAPHICS



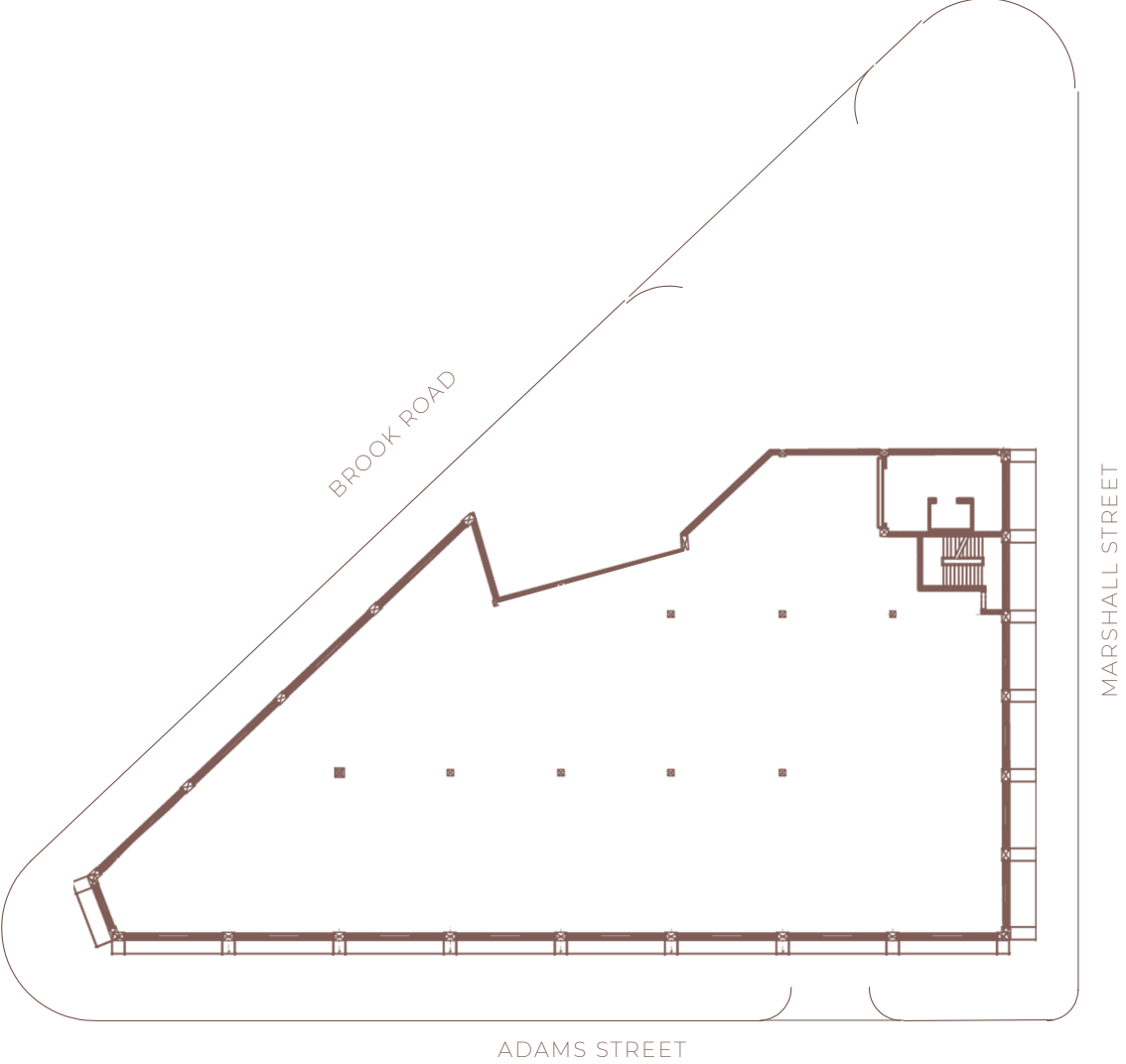
FLOOR 01 PLAN



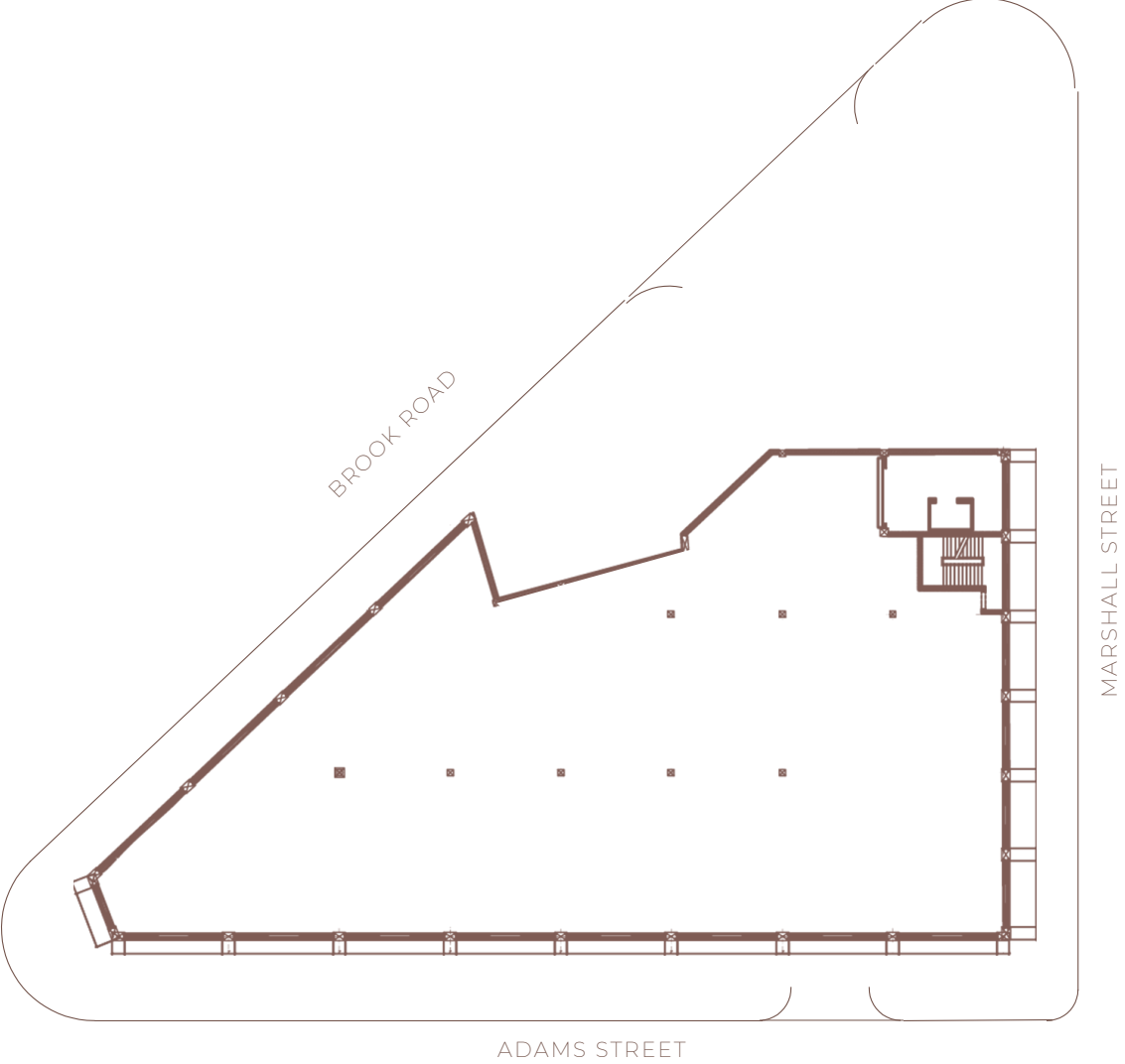
FLOOR 02 PLAN



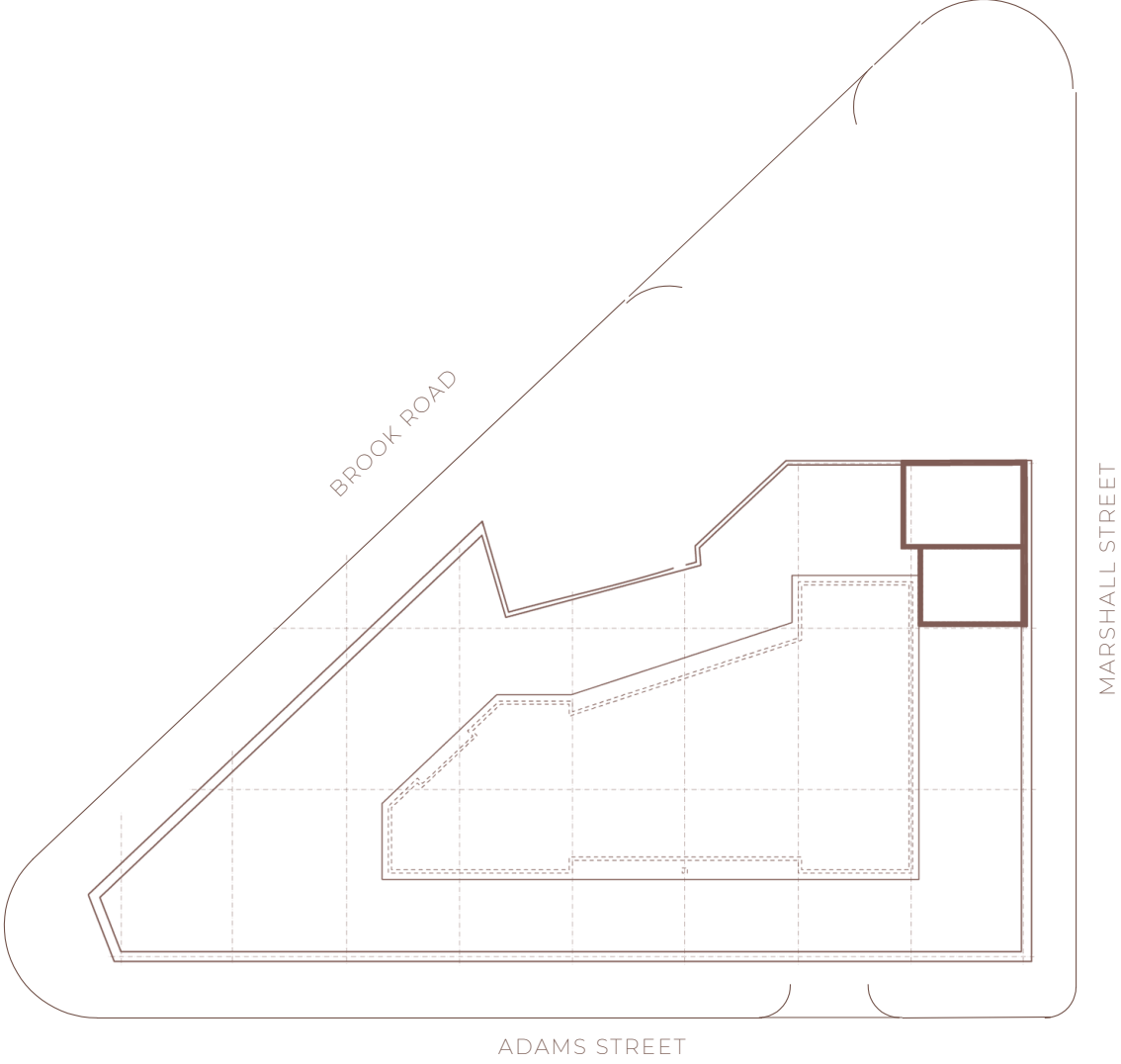
FLOOR 03 PLAN



FLOOR 04 PLAN



FLOOR 05 PLAN

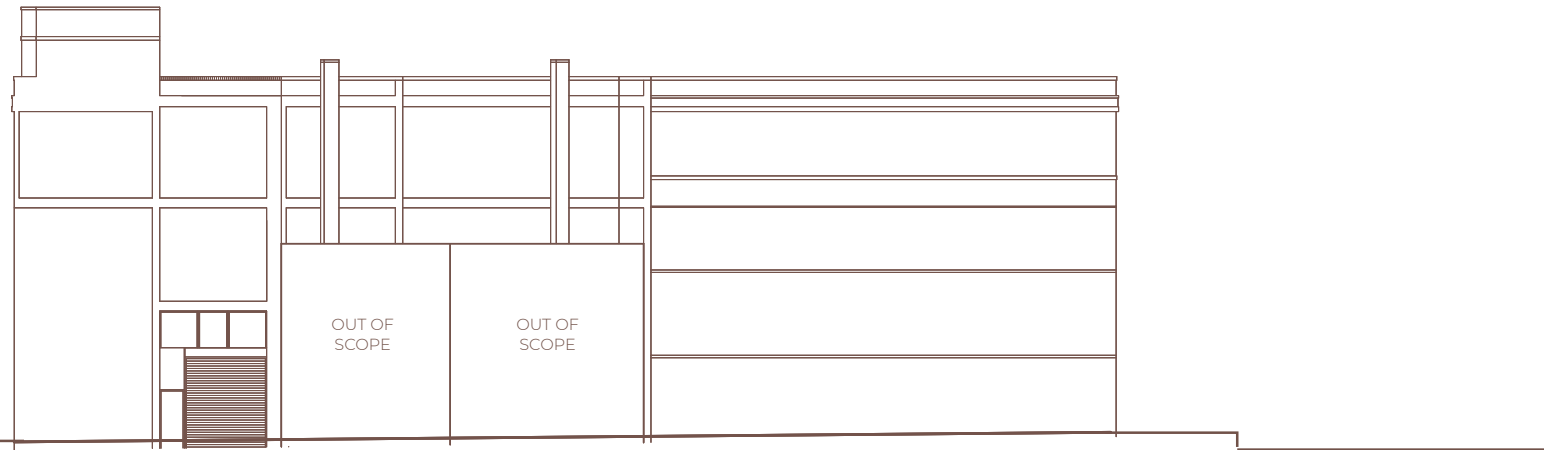


ELEVATIONS



ELEVATION: ADAMS STREET + BROOK ROAD CORNER
FRONT/MAIN ENTRANCE





ELEVATION: MARSHALL STREET + BROOK ROAD



ELEVATION: ADAMS STREET



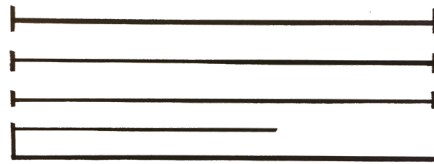
ELEVATION: BROOK ROAD



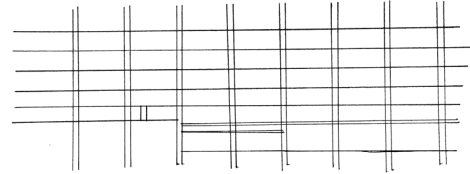
ELEVATION: MARSHALL STREET



SITE PARTI DIAGRAMS: SECTION



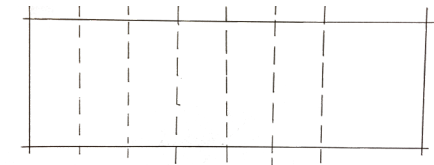
FLOORS + WALLS



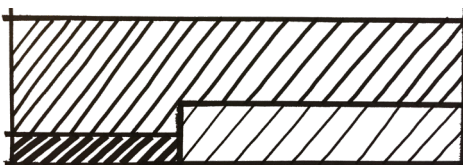
FENESTRATION



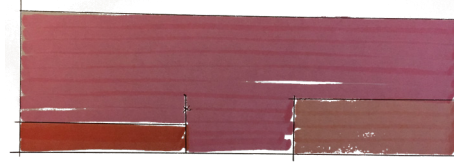
FENESTRATION SOLID VOID



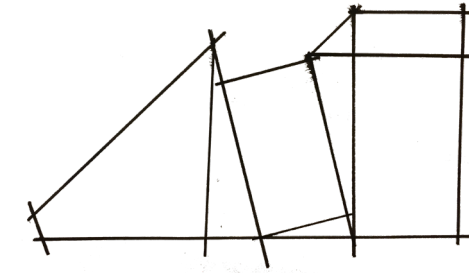
COLUMN GRID



LIGHT AMOUNT



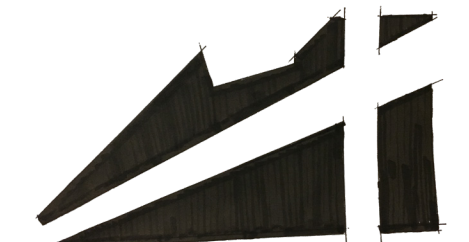
FUNCTION



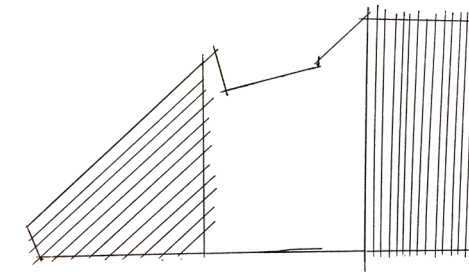
ANGLES



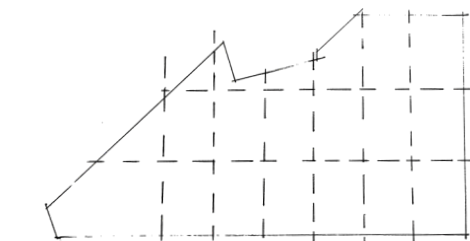
EXTERIOR WALLS + WINDOWS



ENTRANCES



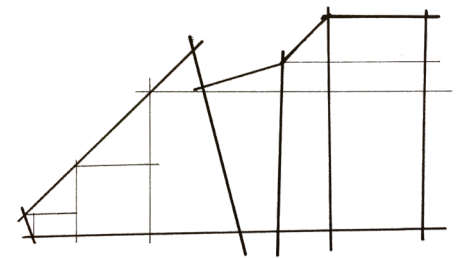
FUNCTION



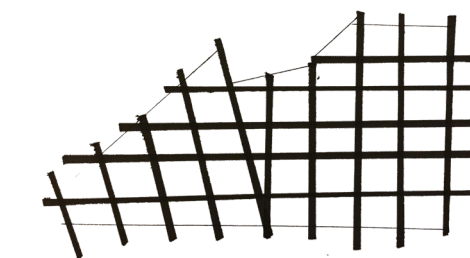
COLUMN GRID



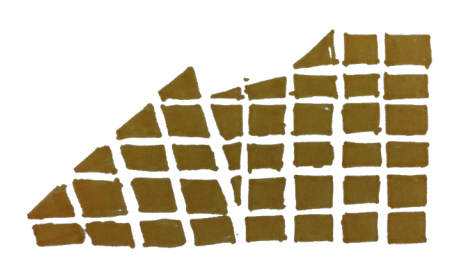
LIGHT FROM WINDOWS



FENESTRATION PATTERN VOID

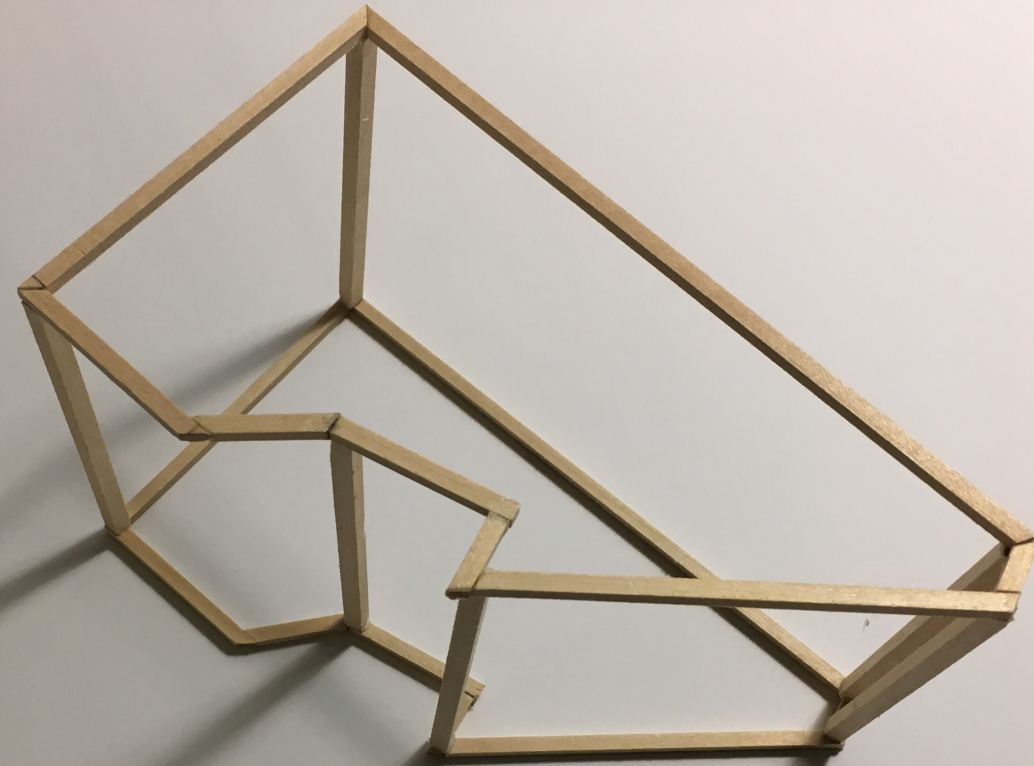


RECTANGLES WITHIN



FENESTRATION PATTERN SOLID

BUILDING PARTI MODEL



This model abstracts the form of the building.

BUILDING PARTI MODEL



This model explores the fenestration patterns.

SITE MAP



- A** Virginia Repertory Theatre
- B** Maggie Lena Walker Memorial
- C** ART 180
- D** Elegba Folklore Society

VICINITY MAP



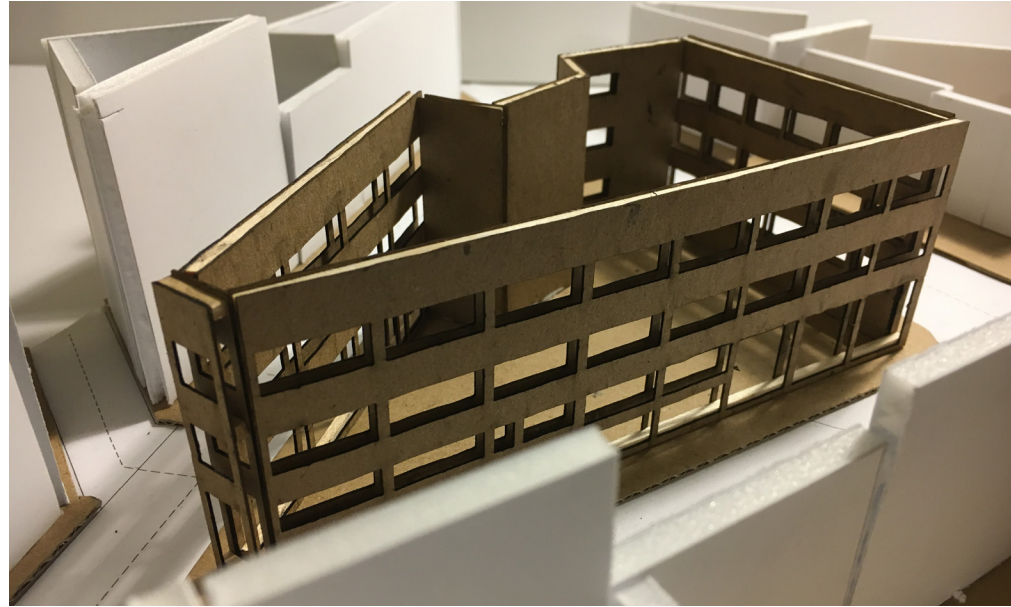
- E** Abner Clay Park
- F** Black History Museum
- G** Arts District Boundary
- H** Jackson Ward District Boundary

DISTRICT HISTORY

Jackson Ward was established in the early 1800's and is the largest predominantly African American nationally registered historic district. According to the New York Times, it was a thriving African American community in the 19th century and continued to thrive until the 1930's. The City of Richmond built an interstate right through the district, displacing many residences and businesses and built public housing. The district fell into decline and is now being gentrified with multifamily housing and restaurants, displacing many of the current residents.

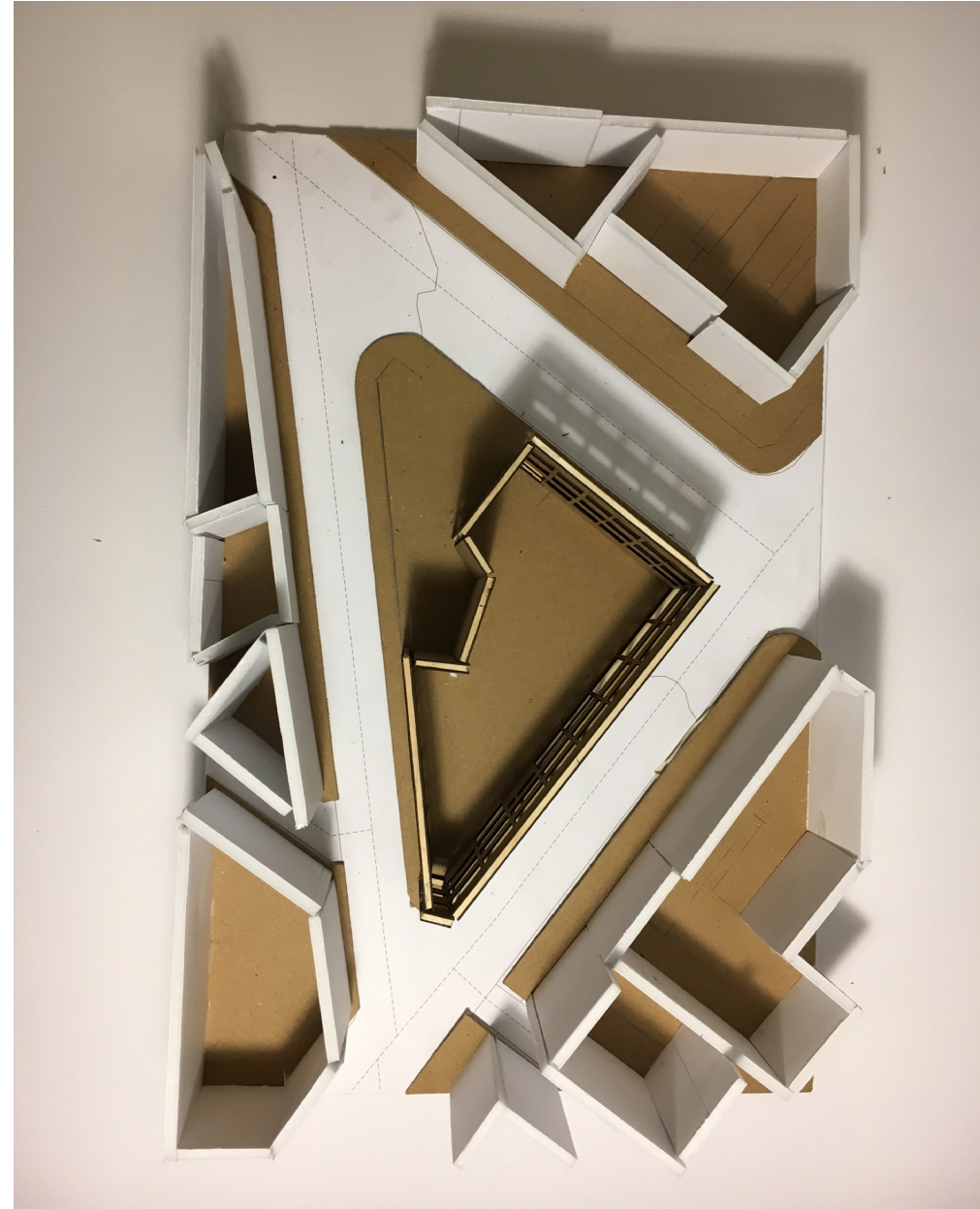
Boundaries of the immediate district (not the area served) are defined by Belvidere Street, Broad street and the interstate. Major paths in this district are Broad Street, Leigh Street, Marshall Street, Clay Street, as they run east to west connecting the district to the rest of the downtown area. Brook road crosses the district at a diagonal making it stand out and providing a quicker path through the district. 2nd street is a historical path in the district. Nodes and landmarks include Abner Clay park, Ebenezer Baptist church, the Bojangles statue, the Maggie L. Walker statue and the Coliseum, due to their standout features and historical significance.

SITE MODEL



Shows close relationships to adjacent buildings.

SITE MODEL



Shows surrounding urban context on all three sides.

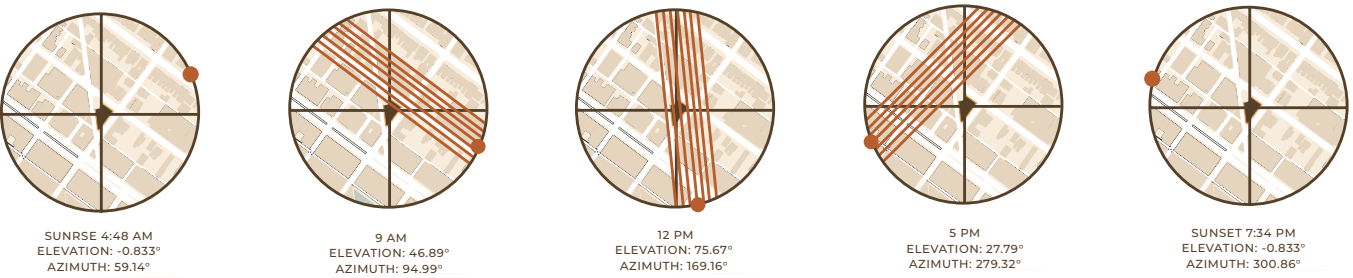
VIEWS FROM THE SITE

- View To Broad St. + Maggie L. Walker Statue
- View To Apartment Buildings
- View To Commerical Establishments
- View To Row Houses

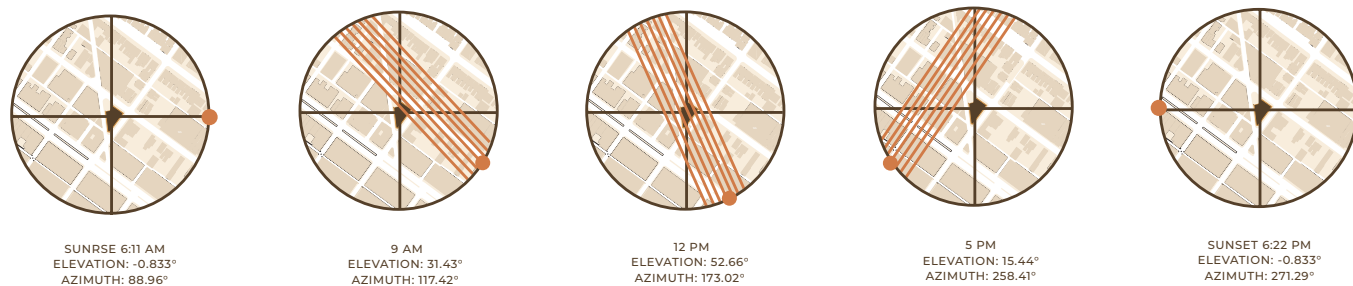


SITE STUDY: SUN PATH

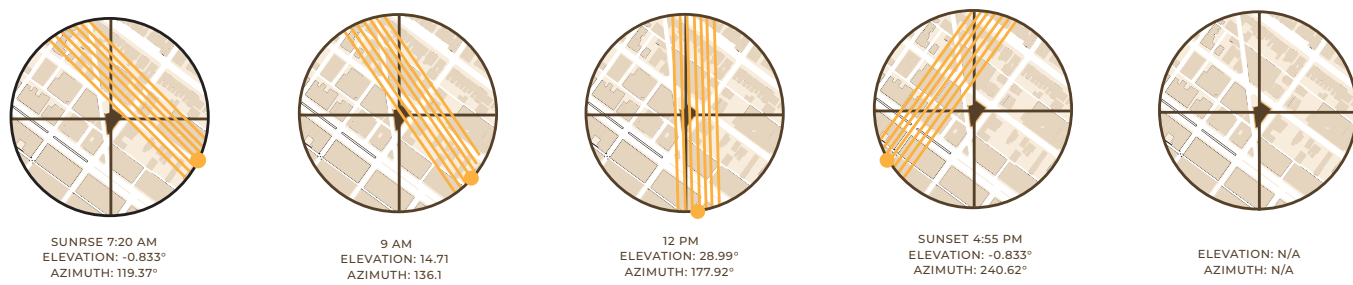
SUMMER SOLSTICE SUN PATH



FALL/ SPRING EQUINOX SUN PATH



WINTER SOLSTICE SUN PATH





1. LOBBY AREA + WELCOMING SPACE

In this area, there will be a space that transitions visitors from the outdoors into the indoors, a reception space where visitors can gather information about programming and events. This space welcomes all visitors, from program participants, to curious walk-in visitors.

2. EXHIBIT + INFORMATION SPACE

This space will serve as a museum exhibit style space on history of African Dance and Dance in African American Culture. Some parts of the exhibit will be permanent and some of it will be rotating. This space is important because it will educate program members and the community on the importance and history of dance, facilitating cultural interest and conversation.

3. GATHERING AREA

This area will serve as a public, casual and flexible, changing space for groups small (2) to larger (5) to gather and have conversations or meetings. Community members may gather here for non-private organization or association chats, talk with their friends, decompress with friends before and after dance programming, for staff to talk with each other, etc.

4. MULTIPURPOSE PERFORMANCE SPACE

In many dance studios, the studios themselves often serves as performance spaces, with the audience sitting on the floor around the room, as dancers perform in the middle. In this case, the performance space will double as rentable programming or event space, and act as a studio for the largest dance classes. This space is important as it will allow for multi-use functionality and allow the center to have a variety of program.

5 + 6. DANCE STUDIOS

In addition to the large multipurpose space, the center will have a large dance studio, for larger classes, such as African Dance, Afro-Caribbean, Community Hip Hop and Zumba. There will be smaller studios that will be used for smaller, more specialized kinds of dance classes, like yoga (maybe). These spaces are important because the support the critical program components of this cultural center.

*Through the process of concept development, a drum studio was added in addition to the dance studios.

7. OFFICE SPACE

Office space for staff that run and support the program's mission and daily functions.

8. LOCKER ROOMS

A place for dancers to change clothes and/or shower.

9. SNACK GRAB / CAFE

A place for visitors to grab snacks, possible from rotating local vendors from restaurants in the neighborhood.

PROGRAM VISUALIZATION



African dance in open community space
bandankoro.com



Dance space used for multipurpose
<https://www.alvinailey.org/rentals-visits/rent-our-space>



Dance teachers
<https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367/230504>



Social dance
https://www.ted.com/talks/camille_a_brown_a_visual_history_of_social_dance_in_25_moves



African dance performance
<https://richmondmagazine.com/topics/eleg-ba-folklore-society/>



African dance performance
<https://richmondmagazine.com/topics/eleg-ba-folklore-society/>

CODE SUMMARY

SQUARE FOOTAGE
BY PROGRAM SPACE (SQ. FT.)

- 1. LOBBY + WELCOME AREA
200
- 2. EXHIBIT + INFORMATION SPACE
300
- 3. SMALL GATHERING AREAS
150 X 4
- 4. MULTIPURPOSE /
PERFORMANCE
5750
- 5. DANCE STUDIO 01 - LARGE
STUDIO
3000
- 6. DANCE STUDIO 02 - SMALL
STUDIO
1500
- 7. OFFICE SPACE
750
- 8. LOCKER ROOMS
1500 X 2
- 9. CAFE
1000

*Through the process of concept development, a drum studio was added in addition to the dance studios.

OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATIONS BY
PROGRAM SPACE

- 1. LOBBY + WELCOME AREA
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-3
- 2. EXHIBIT + INFORMATION SPACE
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-3
- 3. SMALL GATHERING AREAS
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-3
- 4. MULTIPURPOSE /
PERFORMANCE
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-1
- 5 + 6 . DANCE STUDIOS
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-3
- 7. OFFICE SPACE
BUSINESS
GROUP B
- 8. LOCKER ROOMS
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-3
- 9. CAFE
ASSEMBLY
GROUP A-2

OCCUPANT LOAD + WATER
CLOSETS PER GENDER BY
PROGRAM SPACE

- 1. LOBBY + WELCOME AREA
OCCUPANT LOAD: 40
WATER CLOSETS: 1
- 2. EXHIBIT + INFORMATION SPACE
OCCUPANT LOAD:
WATER CLOSETS: 60
- 3. SMALL GATHERING AREAS
OCCUPANT LOAD: 14
- 4. MULTIPURPOSE /
PERFORMANCE
OCCUPANT LOAD: 400
WATER CLOSETS: 4
- 5. DANCE STUDIO 01 - LARGE
STUDIO
OCCUPANT LOAD: 30
- 6. DANCE STUDIO 02 - SMALL
STUDIO
OCCUPANT LOAD: 15
- 7. OFFICE SPACE
OCCUPANT LOAD: 7
WATER CLOSETS: 1
- 8. LOCKER ROOMS
OCCUPANT LOAD: 30
WATER CLOSETS: 5
- 9. CAFE
OCCUPANT LOAD: 66
WATER CLOSETS: 2

GRAPHIC PROGRAM

AREA BY FLOOR

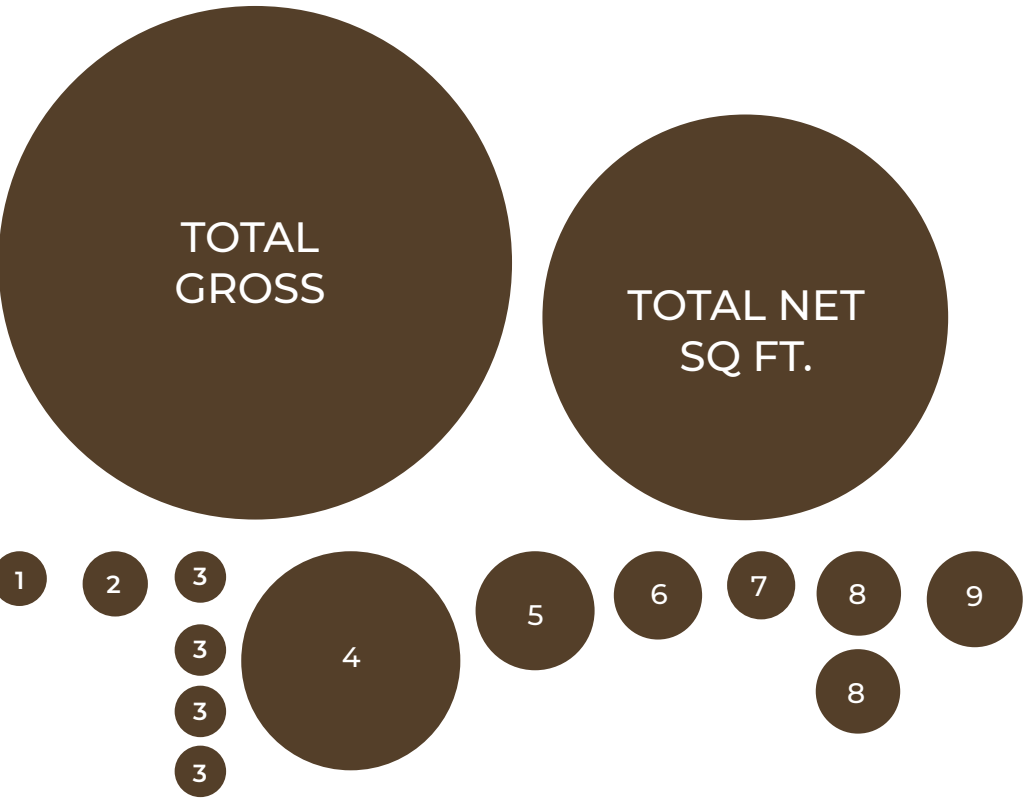
FLOOR 01
8165 (SQ. FT.)

MEZZANINE
6035 (SQ. FT.)

FLOOR 03
8144 (SQ. FT.)

FLOOR 04
8144 (SQ. FT.)

FLOOR 05
2881 (SQ. FT.)



1. LOBBY + WELCOME - 200 SQ FT,
2. EXHIBIT + INFORMATION - 300 SQ FT.
3. GATHERING AREAS - 150 X 4 SQ FT.
4. MULTIPURPOSE + PERFORMANCE - 5750 SQ FT
5. DANCE STUDIO 01 - LARGE STUDIO - 3000 SQ FT.

6. DANCE STUDIO 02 - SMALL STUDIO - 1500 SQ FT.
7. OFFICE SUITE - 650 SQ. FT.
8. LOCKER ROOMS - 1500 X 2 SQ FT.
9. CAFE - 1000 SQ FT.

ADJACENCY MATRIX

		SQ. FOOTAGE NEEDS	ADJACENCIES	PUBLIC ACCESS	DAYLIGHT / VIEW	PRIVACY	PLUMBING	SPECIAL EQUIPMENT	COMMENTS	
1	LOBBY / WELCOME AREA	100	2,4	Y	Y	L	N	N		
2	EXHIBIT AREA	300	1	Y	Y	L	N	Y		
3	GATHERING AREAS	150	5,6	Y	Y	Y	N	N		
4	MULTIPURPOSE/PERFORMANCE	5750	1	Y	Y	L	N	Y		
5	DANCE STUDIO LARGE	3000	3,9	N	Y	L	Y	Y		
6	DANCE STUDIO SMALL	1500	3,9	N	Y	L	Y	Y		
7	DANCE THERAPY SUITE	650		N	Y	H	Y	Y		
8	OFFICE SPACES	750		N	Y	M	Y	Y		
9	LOCKER ROOMS	3000	5,6	N	N	H	Y	Y		
10	CAFE	1000	1,2	Y	Y	L	Y	Y		

Y = YES
N = NO

H = HIGH
M = MEDIUM
L= LOW

- STRONG ADJANCENCY
- MEDIUM ADJANCENCY
- WEAK ADJANCENCY

Have you ever seen an African Woman dance?
Have you ever watched her hips steal the
spotlight gyrating in fervent excitement with
each drumbeat?
Smile synonymous to sun like she did not cry
rivers last night
Like the man who was meant for protection did
not become a predator and her prey
Like his flesh did not become Prime, and hers
pillage for his desires
Watch her hips gyrate in pleasure like they did
not gyrate in pain last night
Like the beautiful earth around her waist did not
crack, and quake like Armageddon
Like she did not pay for her beauty with mundane
beatings.
Have you ever looked into the eyes of death and
told her that there is something lively about her
Watch her hips gyrate in joy like they did not
quiver at the sight of her son six feet under
Watch her hips gyrate with so much freedom like
she did not know slavery too well'

P R E C E D E N T S T U D I E S

PRECEDENT STUDY

EAST BAY PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER

San Francisco, CA
Mark Cavagnero
2011

critical takeaways:
programming and space planning
reuse of a historic interior

In 2005, Cavagmero was commissioned by the east bay performing arts center to renovate and rehabilitate a poorly kept and dilapidated, 16,000 square foot heavy timber, reinforced concrete structure.

The mission of the project was to create a space for public education and a vehicle for social change, which is a mission of my thesis' program.

Cavagnero also has to work within the constraints of a long, narrow volume. The program of this project is similar to mine, with spaces for practice of dance and a place for performance. My thesis will also involve the challenge of designing to a uniquely shaped space.

Syrkett, Asad. (2012). East Bay Center for the Performing Arts.. Architectural Record, 59. Retrieved September 29, 2018.

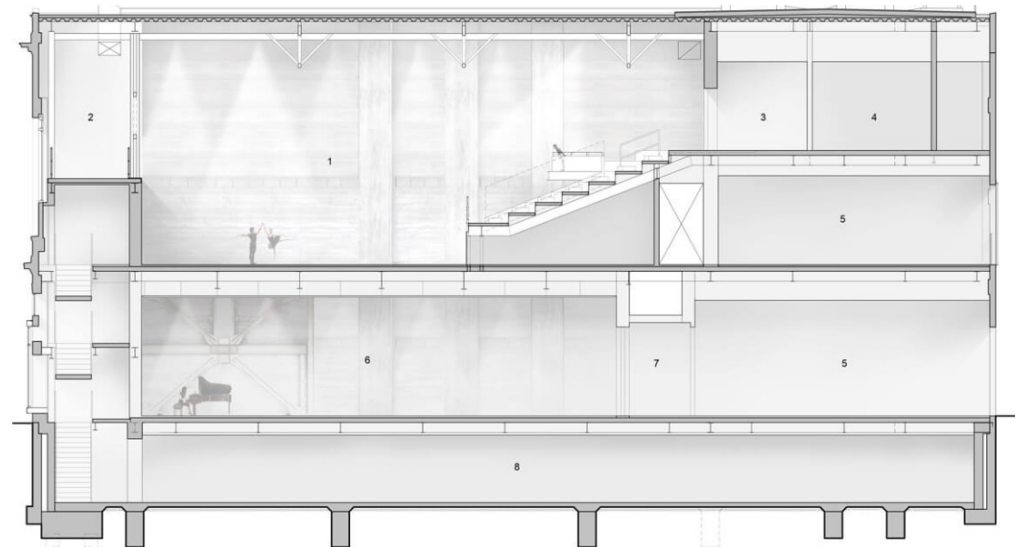
1. Large open space with wood floors and lighting grid provide practical support for dance program.

2. Large windows allow for community to experience the program and dancers to feel connected with the surrounding community.

3. Lobby space allows for check-in and information.

Photos:
<https://www.cavagnero.com/project/east-bay-center-for-the-performing-arts/>



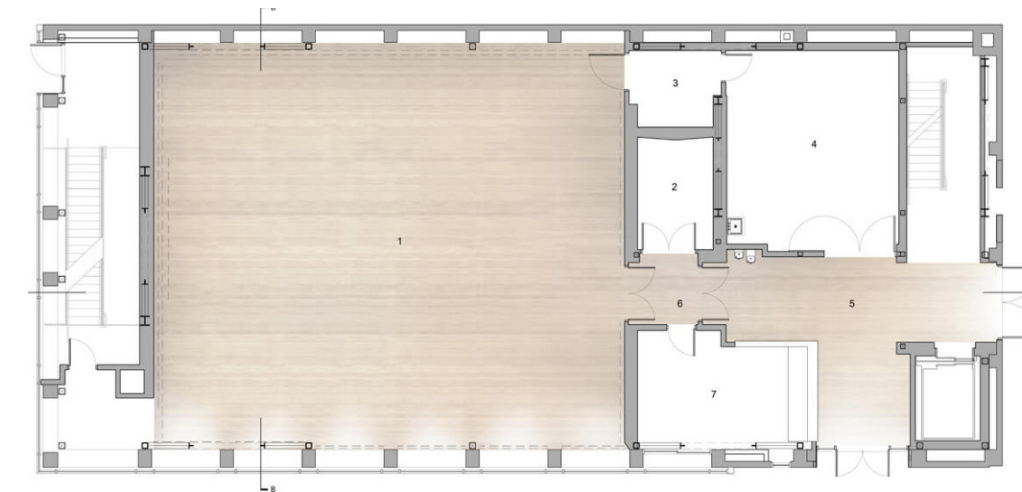
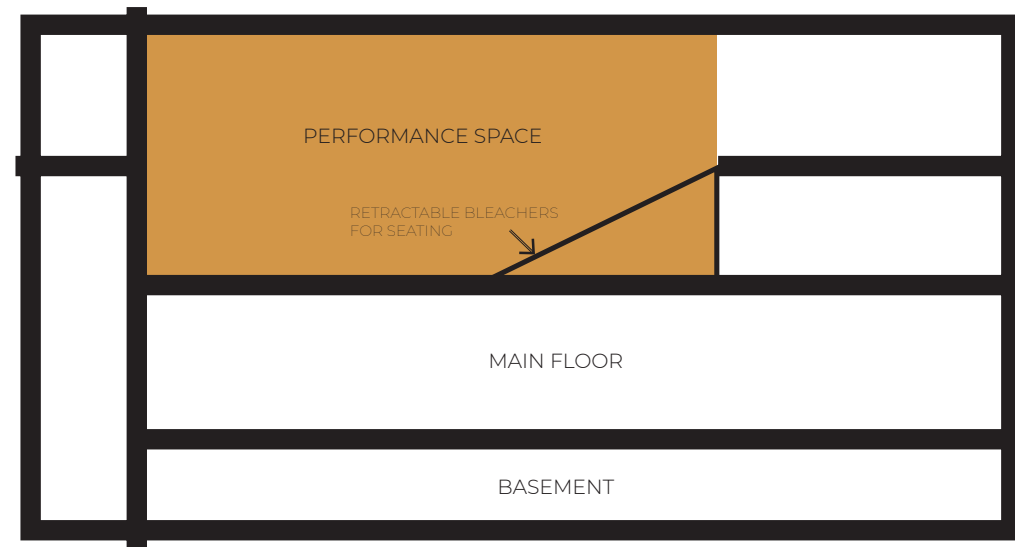


In section, the performance space spans two floors, creating the openness desires for performance, while creating a hierarchy in relation to the other spaces in the building.

Performance space converts into practice space by way of retractable bleachers that push into the space between the second and third floor.

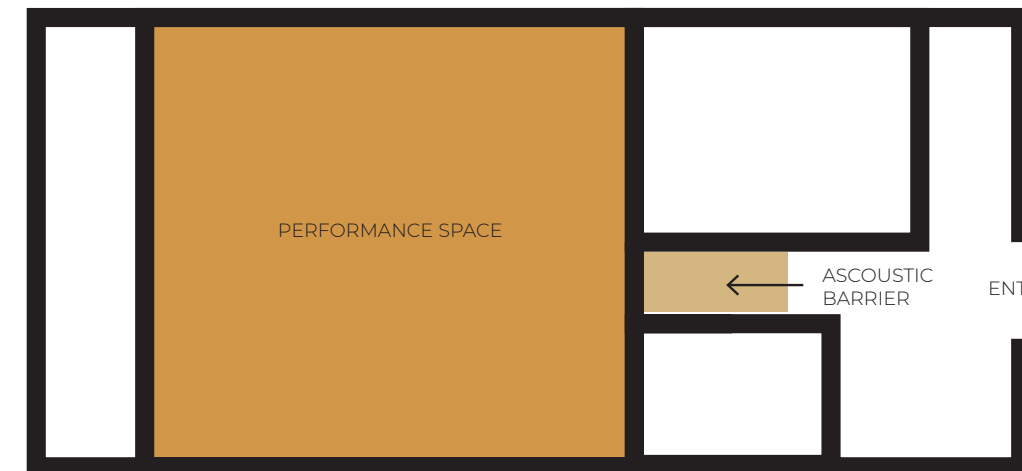
With my project requiring openness, the need for the performance space to be multi-functional and with an existing

Photos:
<https://www.cavagnero.com/project/east-bay-center-for-the-performing-arts/>



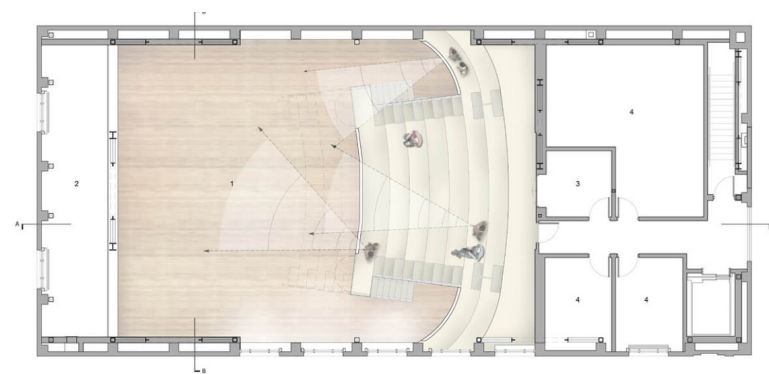
An acoustic barrier separates the entry, welcome and music classroom areas. Given the drumming that will happen with my program, acoustics should be heavily considered in design.

Photos:
<https://www.cavagnero.com/project/east-bay-center-for-the-performing-arts/>

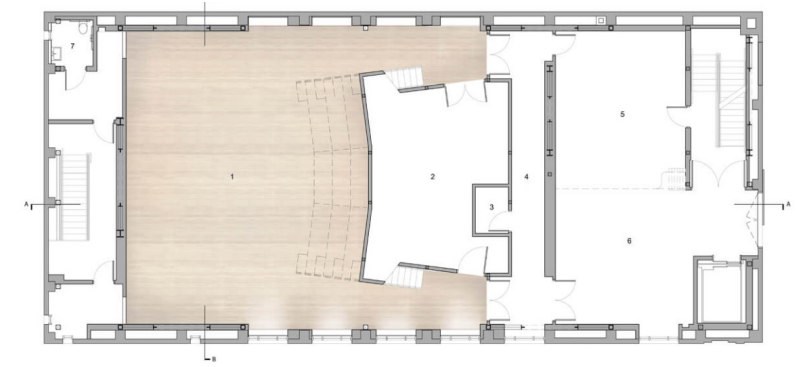
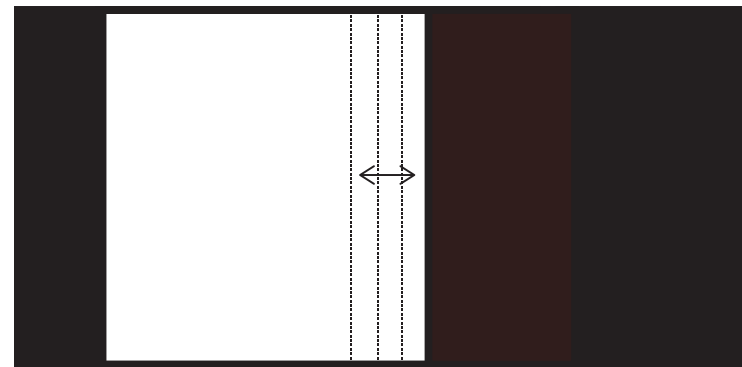




The third floor is open to the second floor below, as this performance space spans two stories. The seating bleachers expand and contract, allowing the space to be used for another purpose when a performance is not taking place.



Photos:
<https://www.cavagnero.com/project/east-bay-center-for-the-performing-arts/>



PRECEDENT STUDY

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER:
DEE AND CHARLES WYLY
THEATRE

Dallas, Texas
REX + OMA
2009

critical takeaways:
relationship between
performance space and
performance support spaces

“Unlike a typical theater, the Wyly positions back-of-house and front-of-house facilities above and beneath the auditorium instead of encircling it. The theater can be altered into a wide array of configurations -- including proscenium, thrust and flat floor -- empowering directors and scenic designers to choose the stage-audience configuration that fulfills their artistic desires, or to invent one of their own. Directors can incorporate the Dallas skyline and streetscape into performances at will, as the auditorium is enclosed by an acoustic glass facade with optional black-out blinds and panels that can be opened to

allow patrons or performers to enter the auditorium directly from outside.”

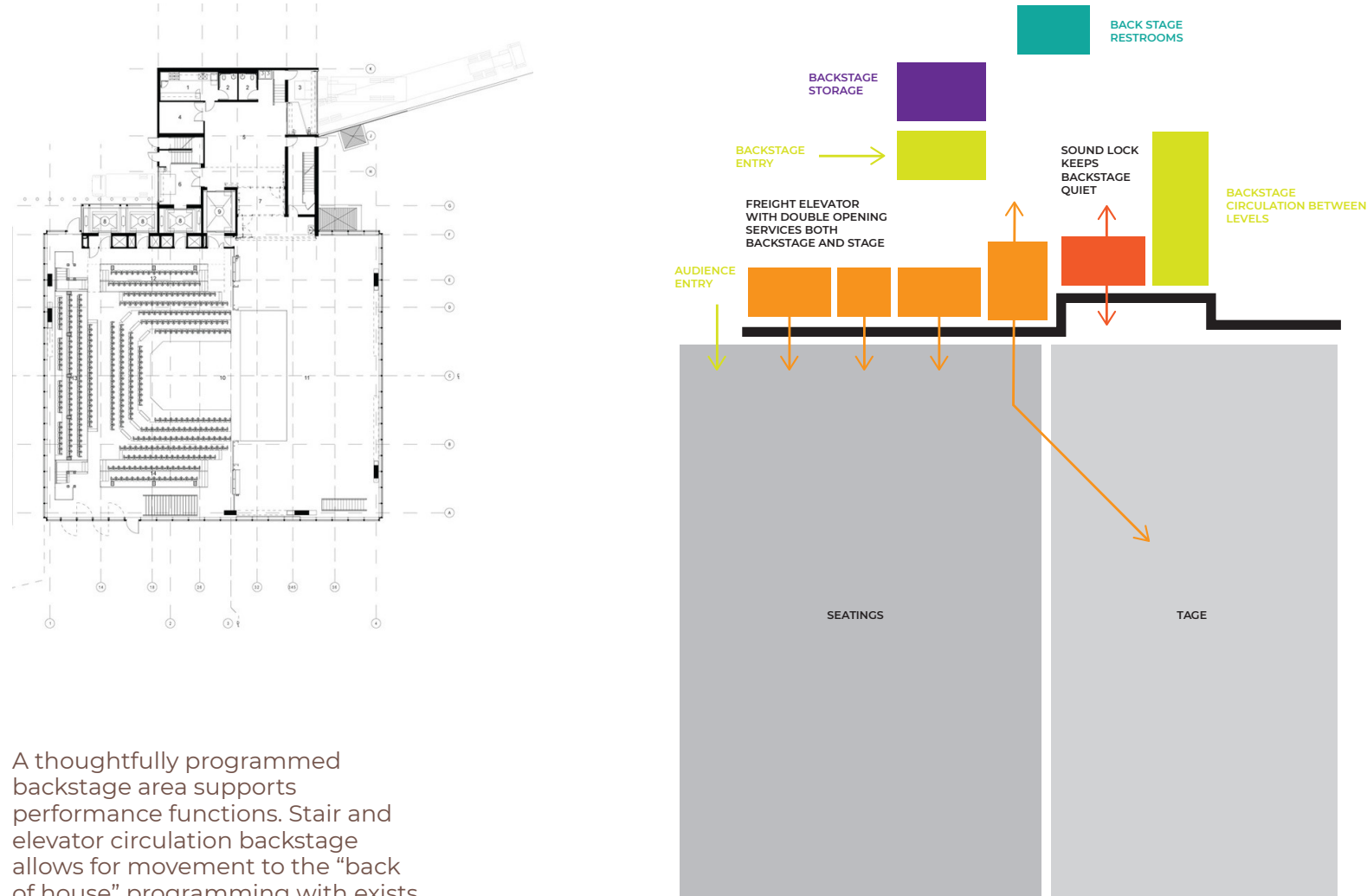
REX/OMA's AT&T Performing Arts Center's Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre Opens. (2009, Oct 15). PR Newswire Retrieved from <http://proxy.library.vcu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.vcu.edu/docview/450415927?accountid=14780>

1. The project features a flexible, multistory performance space. In this arrangement, the performance happens in the center of the space.

2. Architectural element filters light to create a rhythmic pattern.

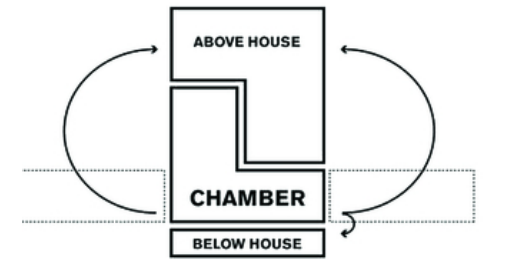
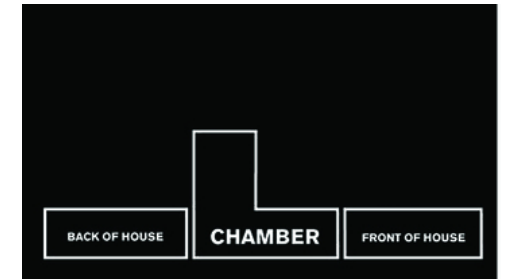
Photos:
<https://rex-ny.com/project/wyly-theatre/>





A thoughtfully programmed backstage area supports performance functions. Stair and elevator circulation backstage allows for movement to the “back of house” programming with exists above and below the performance floor.

Photos:
<https://rex-ny.com/project/wyly-theatre/>



The project challenges the relationship of the backstage area and welcome area to the performance area. They are typically in a successive order. Here, they are stacked. This may work well for my buildings performance program. Due to spatial needs, performance support could be moved to another level.

Photos:
<https://rex-ny.com/project/wyly-theatre/>

PRECEDENT STUDY

PERRY AND MARTY
GRANOFF CENTER FOR THE
CREATIVE ARTS,
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Providence, Rhode Island
Diller Scofidio + Renfro
2011

critical takeaways:
vertical relationships
relationship between floors
relationship between egress and dance
or performance spaces

DS+R designed this space for the buildings' users to be unhindered by boundaries. The misalignment of the floors and the shear glass wall between them allow the rooms to be visually connected to each other, enhancing an overall feeling of lightness and airiness.

"The building is open in every way—open plan, open section, open-sourced." Large floor plates, high ceilings, and

complete flexibility are the defining characteristics of the building's main studio, meeting, and production spaces, which occupy the front section of the four-story building and are fully visible from the street."

LANG HO, C. (2011, March 02). Perry and Marty Granoff Center for the Creative Arts. Retrieved from <https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/buildings/perry-and-marty->

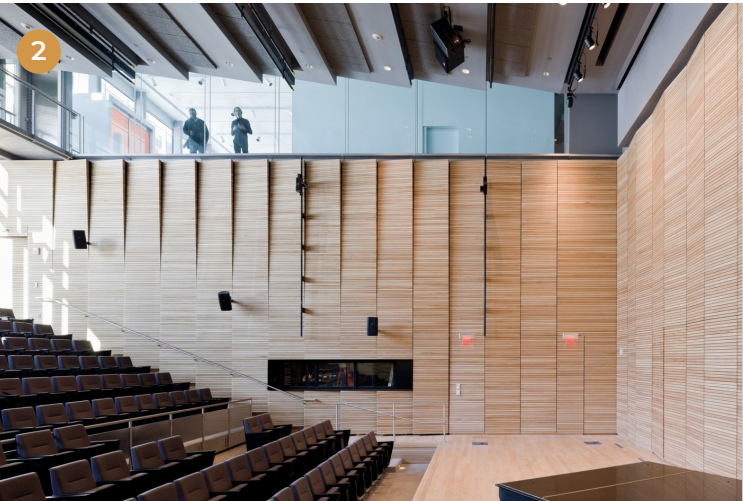
1. Glass partitions create connection between spaces, and programmatic activities, creating community.

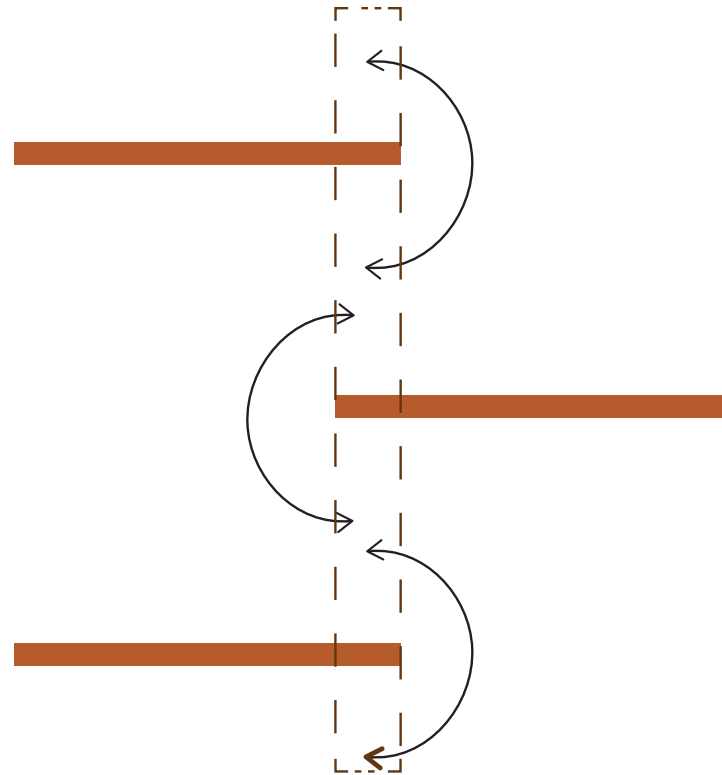
2. Glass partitions above performance space allow visitors to look in.

3. Columns are integrated into the performance space.

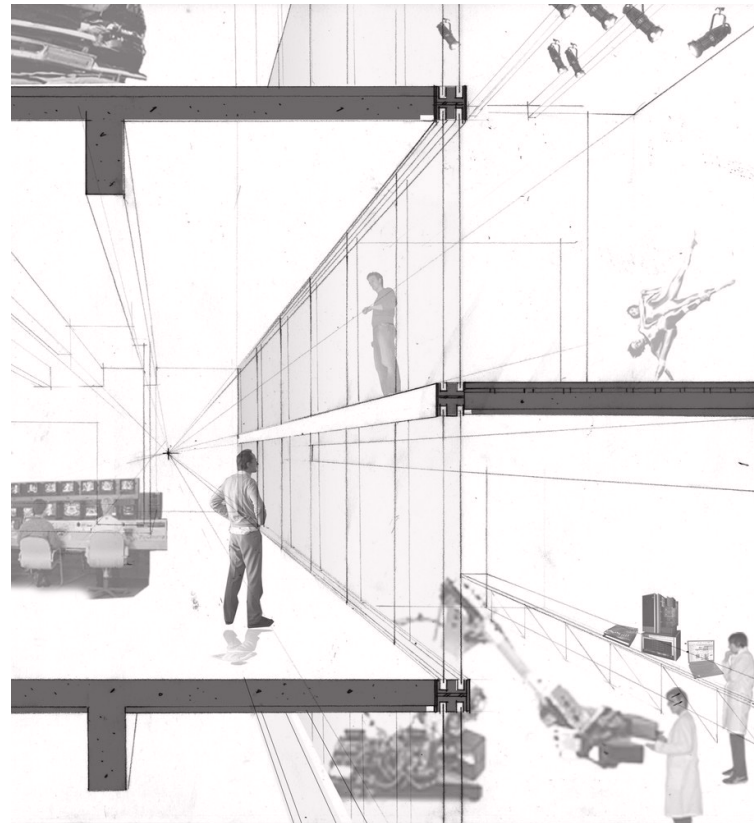
Photos:

<https://www.archdaily.com/112338/perry-and-marty-granoff-center-for-the-creative-arts-brown-university-diller-scofidio-renfro/500772b228ba0d4148002450-perry-and-marty-granoff-center-for-the-creative-arts-brown-university-diller-scofidio-renfro-photo>

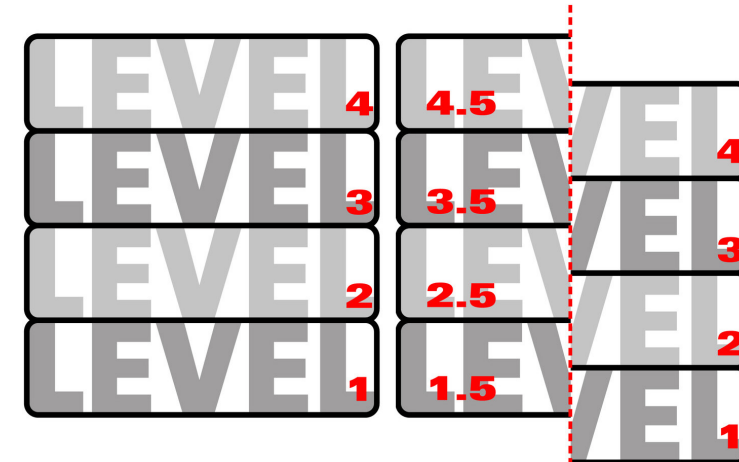




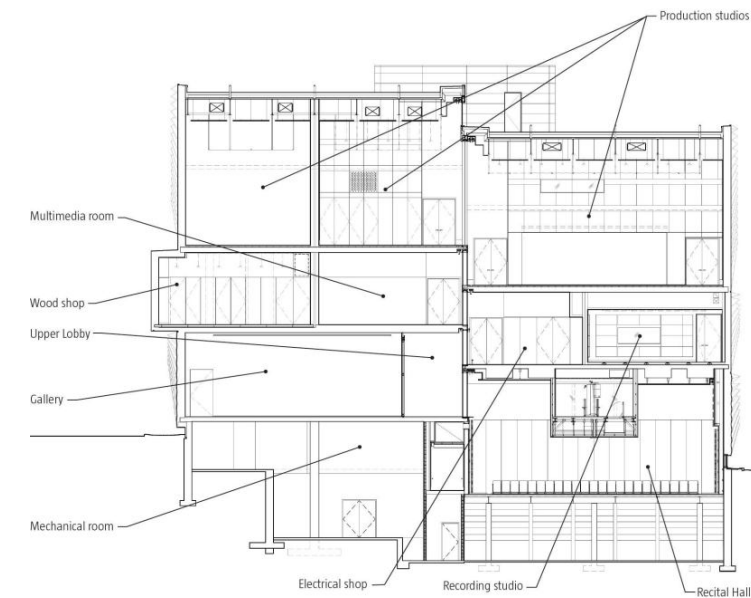
The staggered position of the floors and the glass partition allow connection between floors and create a transparent flow and sense of community vertically.



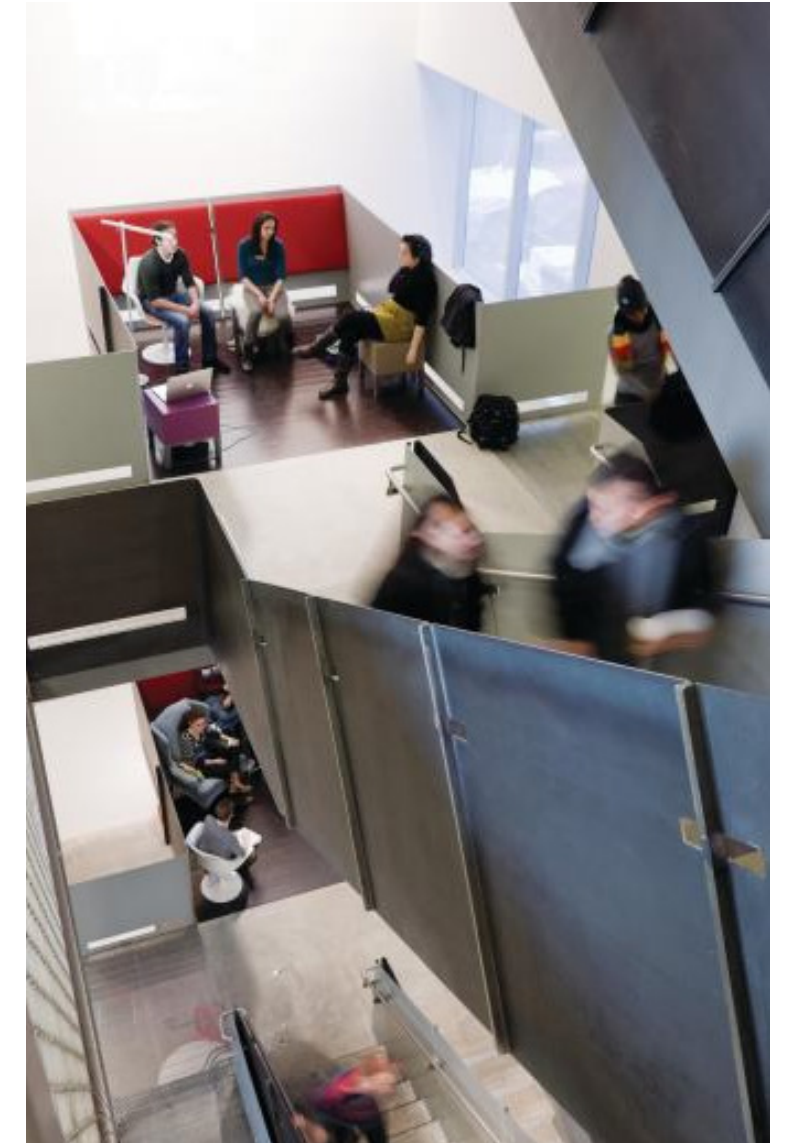
Photos:
<https://www.archdaily.com/112338/perry-and-marty-granoff-center-for-the-creative-arts-brown-university-diller-scofidio-renfro/500772b228ba0d4148002450-perry-and-marty-granoff-center-for-the-creative-arts-brown-university-diller-scofidio-renfro-photo>



Split levels allow for connection between spaces.



Split levels allow for connection between spaces.



Relationship between circulation and gathering area create opportunities for interaction.

PRECEDENT STUDY

JOAN WEILL CENTER FOR DANCE (ALVIN AILEY SCHOOL)

New York, New York
IB Architects
2007

critical takeaways:
programmatic similarities +
multipurpose dance spaces

The Alvin Ailey School of Dance is the largest American facility dedicated entirely to dance. The school had previously been borrowing space. “Having a building,” says Ailey artistic director Judith Jamison, “conveys stability and strength.”

Red brick, a common material in the largely residential neighborhood, encloses the core mechanical and circulation spaces, which wrap around the north and west sides of the building. Projecting from the hefty L-shape core are layers of glass-walled dance studios, which appear to float. All studios have sprung pine floors.

The top four floors are reserved for company use. Each floor has a reception area that doubles as a lounge for

administrative staff and dancers. The second, third, and fourth floors house administrative offices and two conference rooms.

The large windows allow dancers to see the city and the city to see the dancers.

There are large images of African American dancers throughout the space. Those images make the dancers feel that it’s really their building,”

Bernstein, F. A. (2005). Revealing Movement. Interior Design, 290-299. Retrieved September 29, 2018.

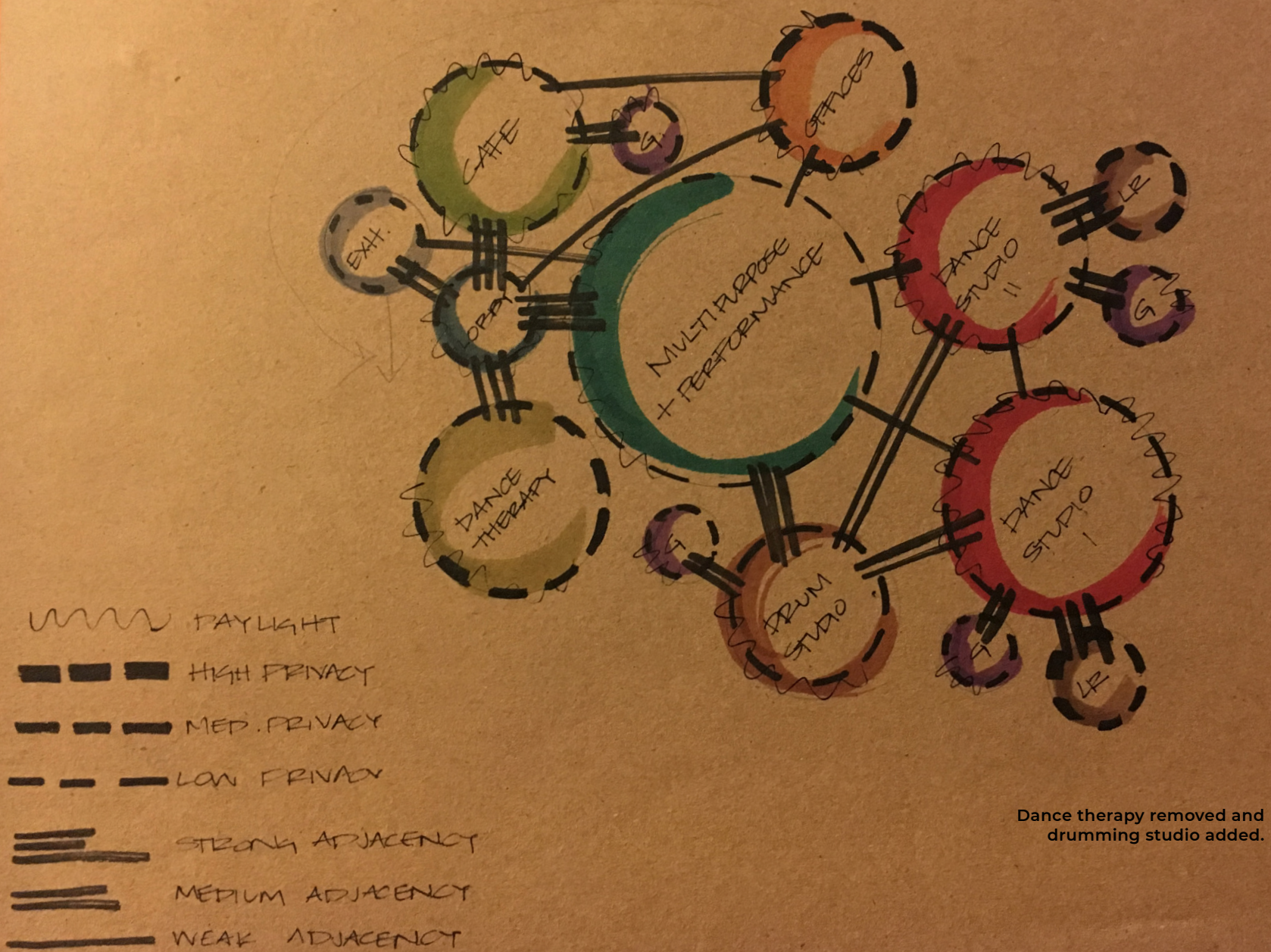
1. Large dance studio overlooking NYC
<https://structuretone.com/designed-for-dance/>

2. Photos of dancers throughout the space
<https://www.ibarchitects.com/project/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater>

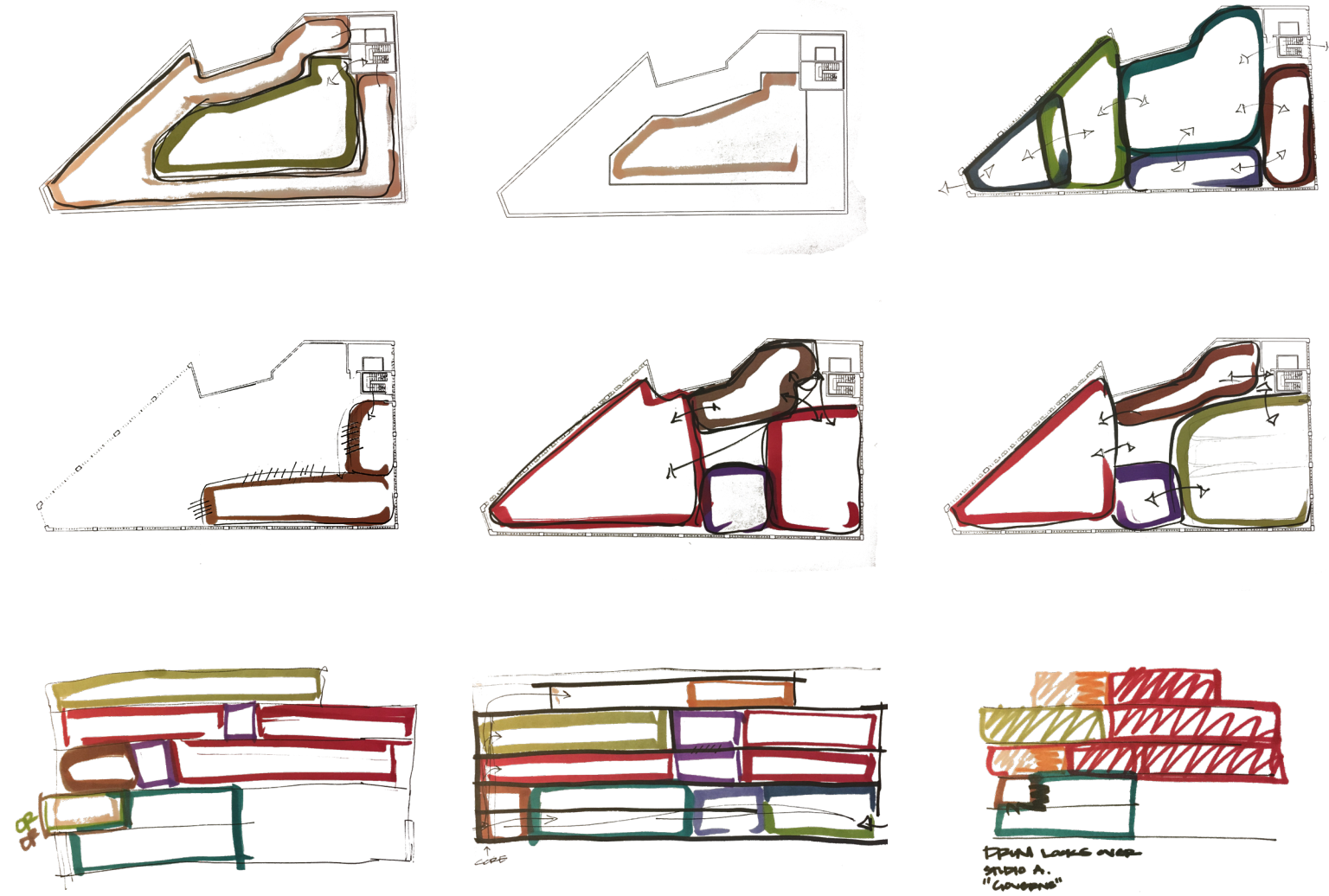
3. Dance space used for multipurpose
<https://www.alvinailey.org/rentals-visits/rent-our-space>



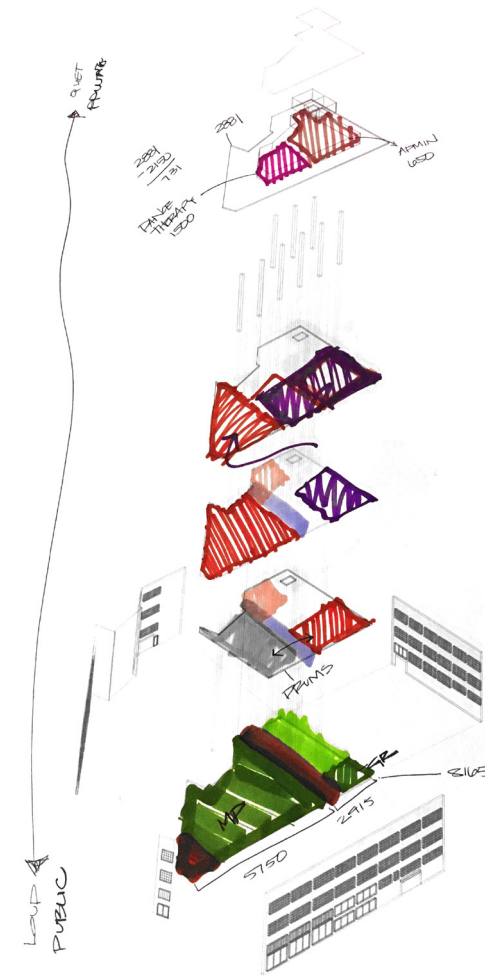
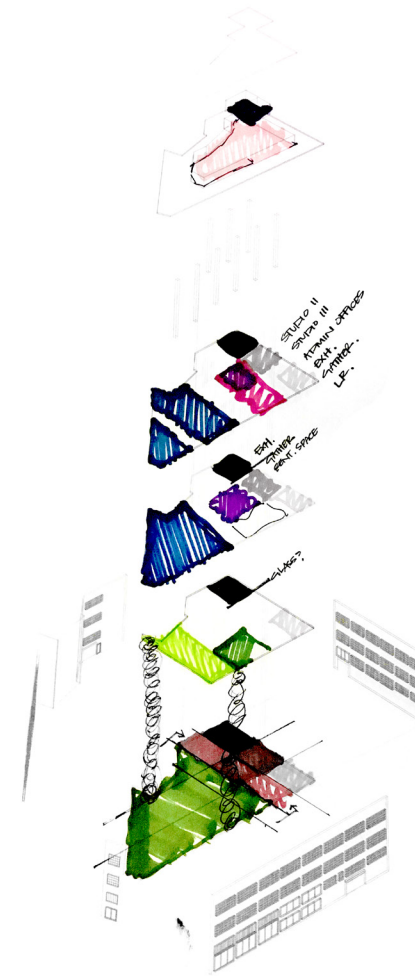
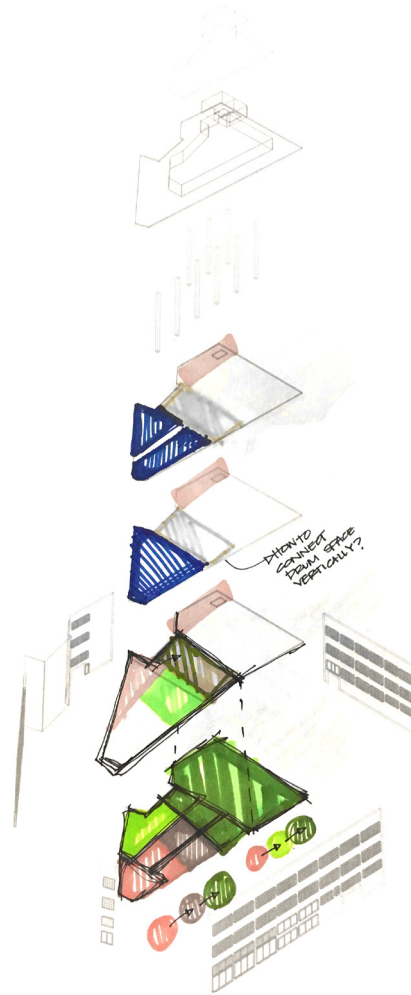
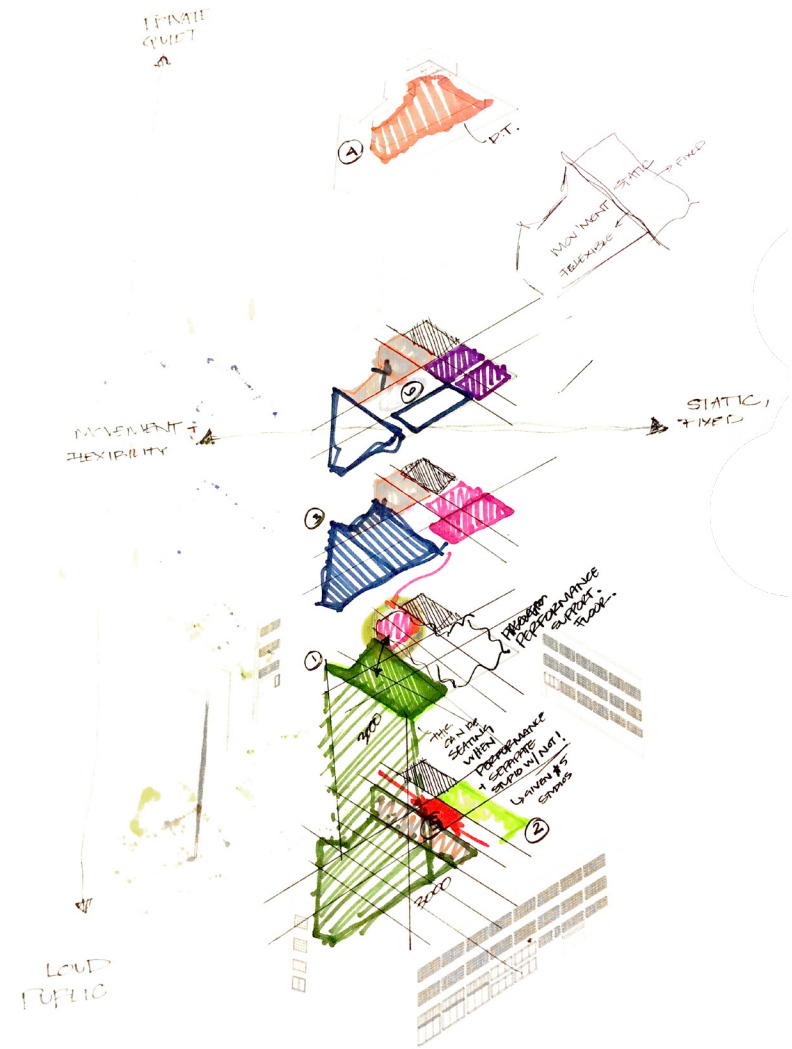
INITIAL BUBBLE DIAGRAM



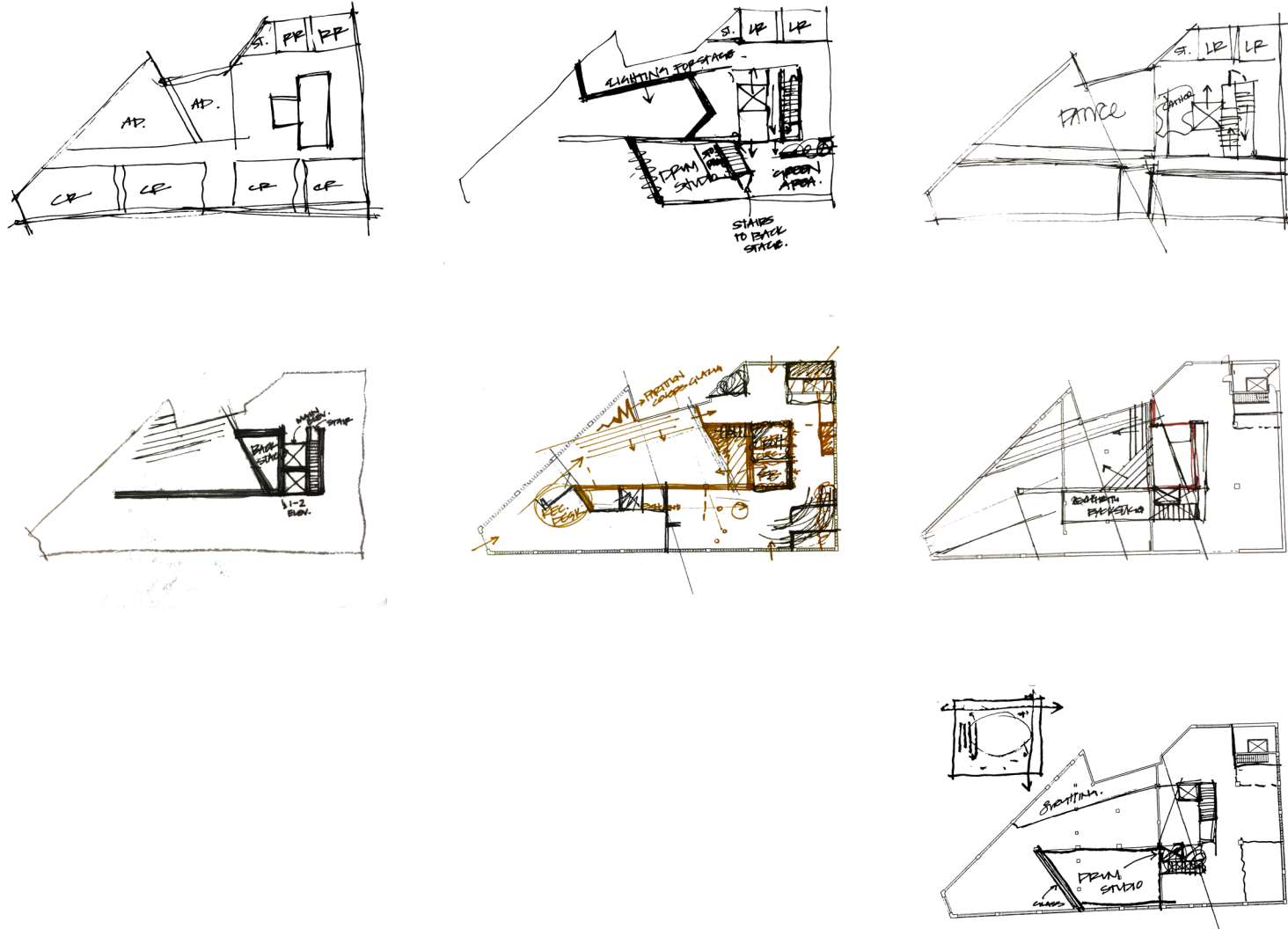
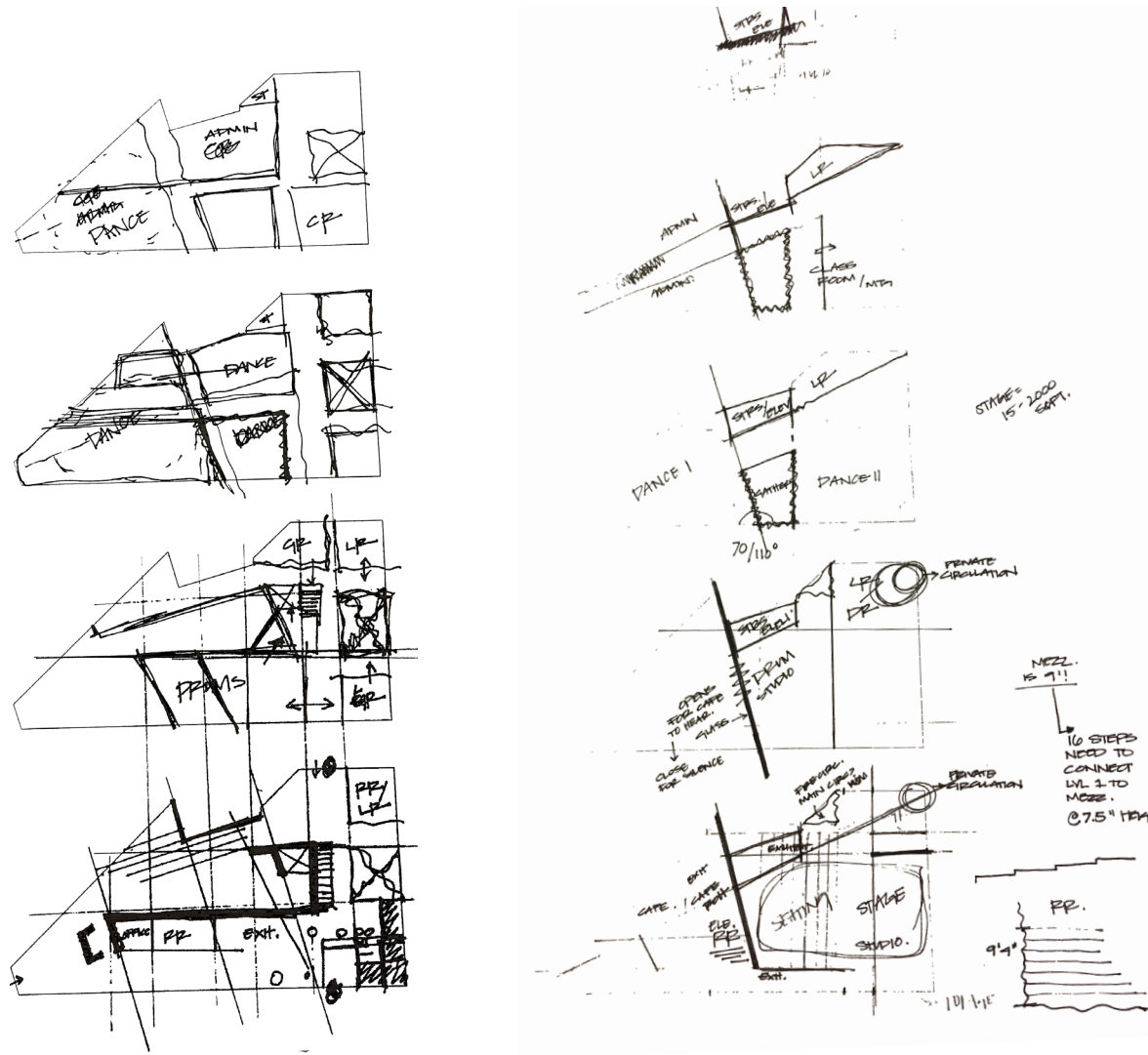
PROCESS SKETCHES: BLOCK PLAN



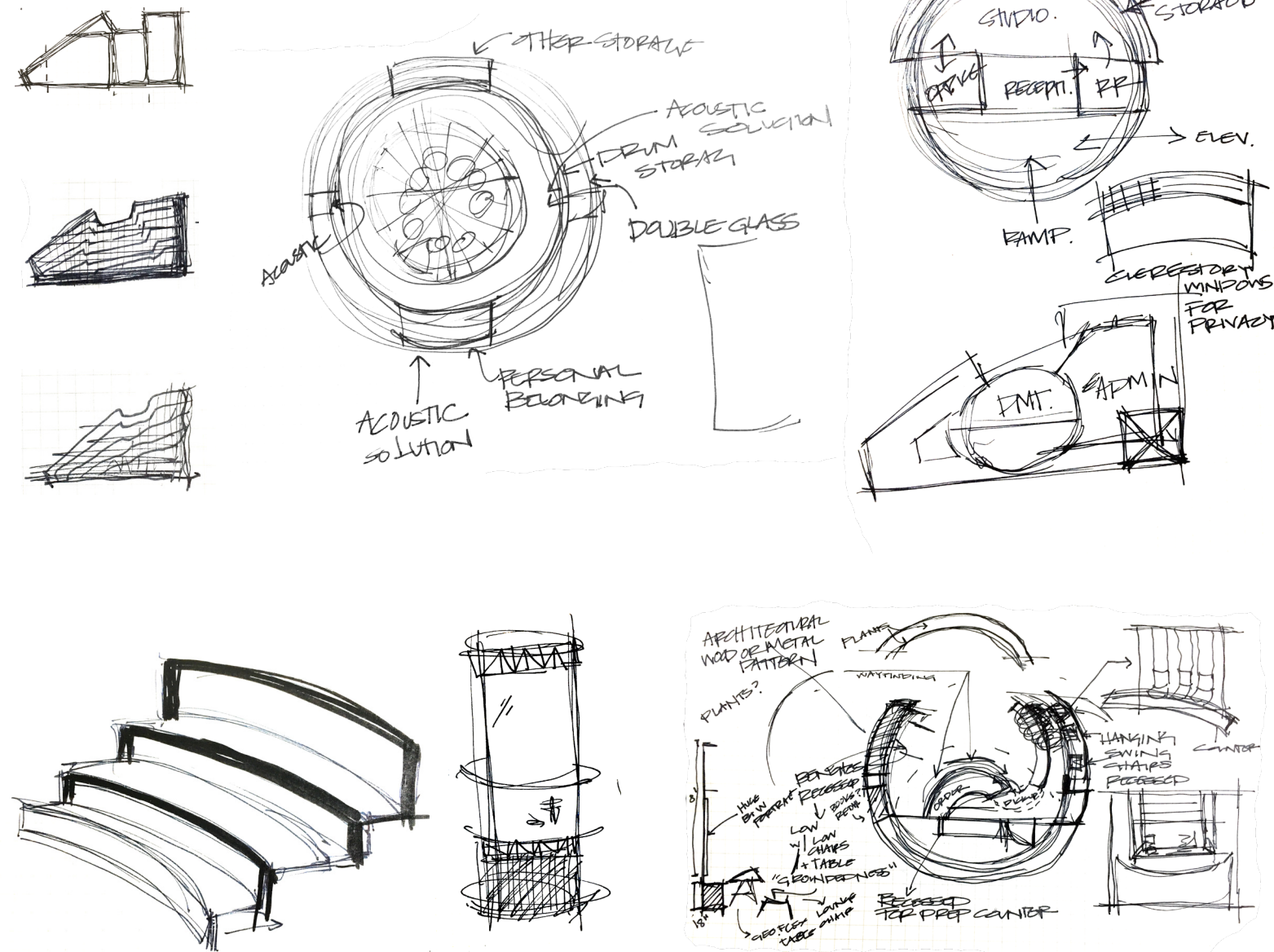
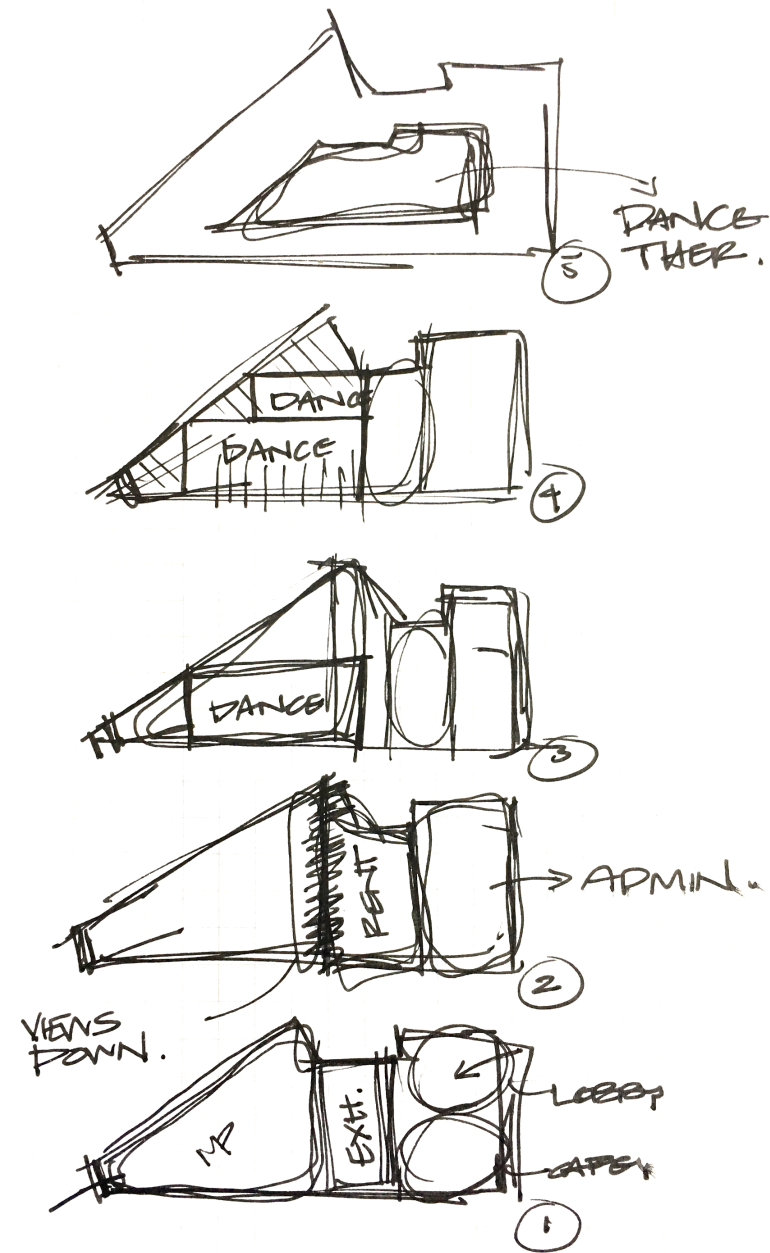
BLOCK PLAN AXON SKETCHES



PLAN SKETCHES



PLAN SKETCHES



INITIAL CONCEPTS EXPLORED

Concept work initially explored, two and three dimensionally, distinguishing qualities and characteristics of West African dance that transcend country, culture and ethnic group.

SUPPLE

In West African dance, the body is supple. It is willing and ready to respond to change. This is a defining characteristic of movement in West African dance. The vital aliveness in the movement is demonstrated through flexibility and suppleness. The knees should always be supplely bent.

AKIMBO OR ANGULAR

Angularity is a characteristic of African dance and style that cuts across ethnic distinctions and is considered dynamic and equated with life.

MUSIC CONTROLS DANCE

In traditional African dance, it is the integrated art of movement that is controlled by music.

It’s relationship to music distinguishes it. If the music didn’t exist, the dance wouldn’t.

POLYMETRIC RHYTHM

Polymetric rhythm is a characteristic of African dance and style that cuts across ethnic distinctions. It refers to different body parts moving at different rhythms and the idea of their being a constant rhythm that individuals deviate from and return to.

EXPRESSION THROUGH MOVEMENT

African dance is a LANGUAGE, its a form of communication that allows for expression of emotion, sentiment, belief and other reactions through movement.

STYLIZED ASSYMETRY

Stylized assymetry is a characteristic of African dance that distinguishes it and contributes to its vital aliveness or “coolness”.

STYLIZED INSTABILITY

West Africans cultivate divinity through richly stablized traditionsof personal balance, which is demonstarted in the movements of dance.

HIGH INTENSITY

West African dance is vitally alive due to many factors, including its high intensity and high energy.

GROUNDDED

Being grounded or close to the earth is a common distinguishing characteristic of West African dance and is often communicated through bended knees.

COMMUNITY / CIRCLE FORMATION

One common African dance formation is the circle, allowing dance to be a communal act.

SET DE FLO / CIRCLE FORMATION

One common African dance formation is the set de flo, where dancers perform or compete while a crowd gathers around to spectate.

LAYERS OF MOVEMENT

This model focuses on the layers of movement that occur in dance.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

African dance is deeply ingrained into the culture. It brings the community together.

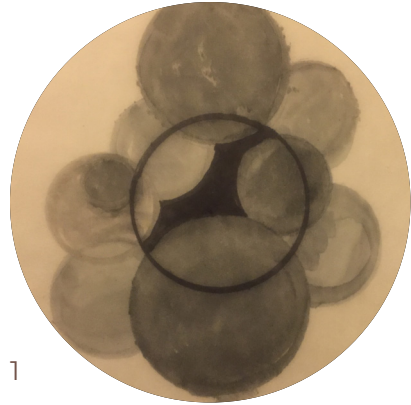
BENDED KNEE

“Dance with bended knee, less you be taken for a corpse” -African Proverb

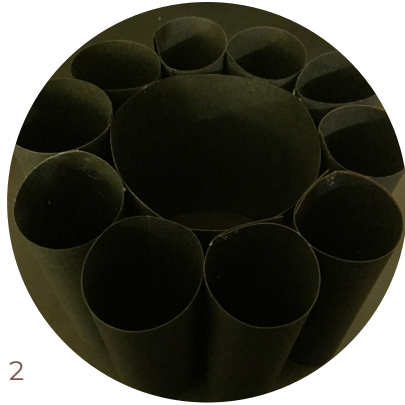
Knees are supple and bent. Straight line of the back through the neck and head, set over buoyant knees and stable feet. Flexible potency should be at the knees.

Luana. (2018). What makes that Black?: The African-American aesthetic in American expressive culture. United States: Luana Luana.

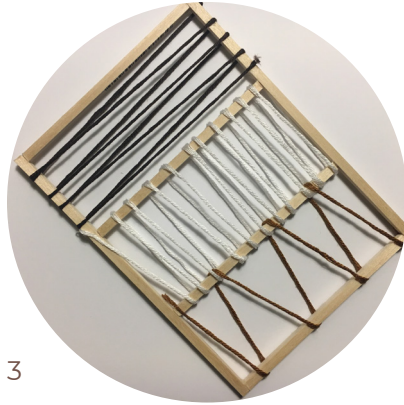
Welsh-Asante, K. (1996). African dance : An artistic, historical, and philosophical inquiry . Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.



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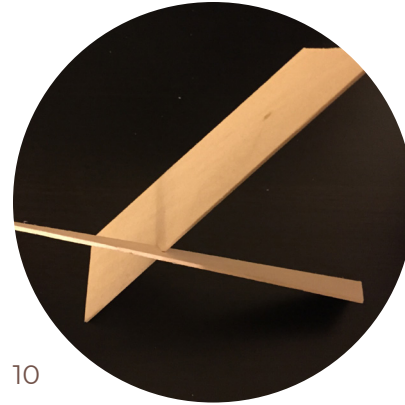
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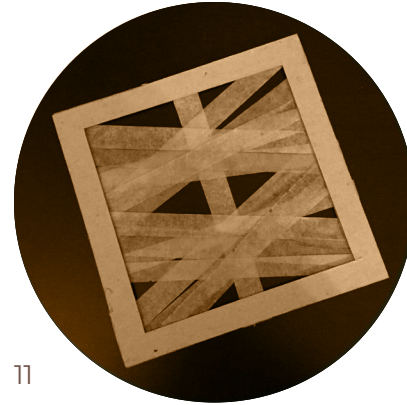
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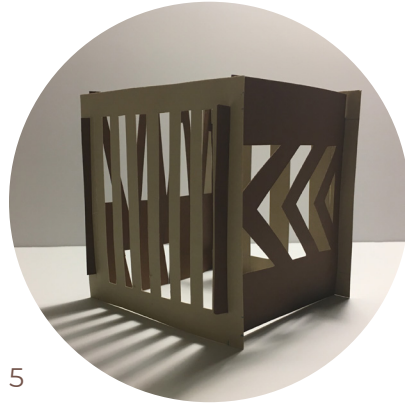
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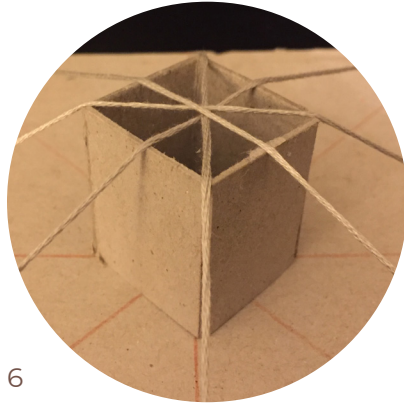
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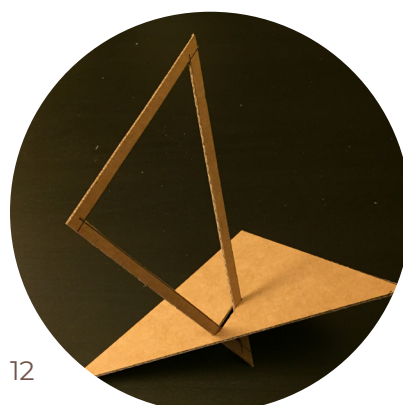
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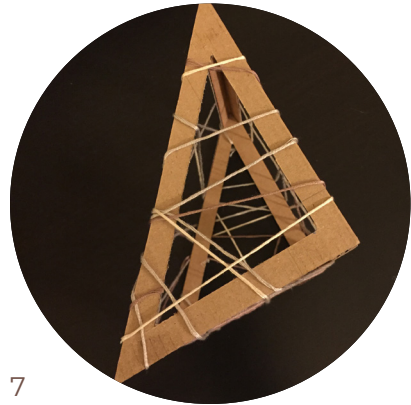
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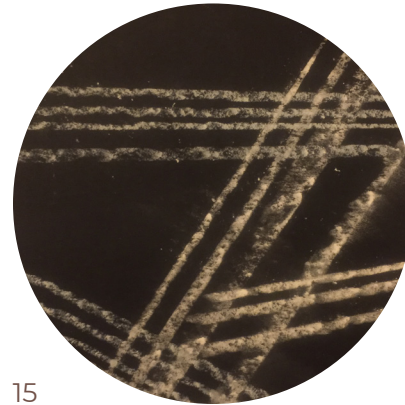
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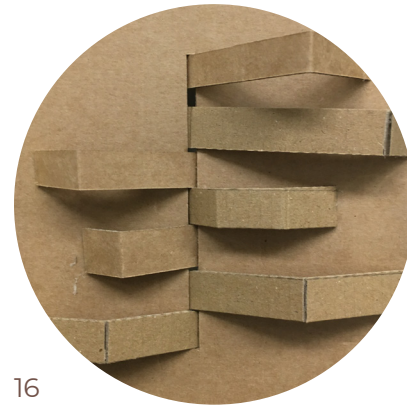
8

1. Community
2. Set de Flo / Circle Formation
3. Polycentric Rhythm
4. Akimbo / Angularity
5. Exterior Concrete
6. Community
7. Polymetric Rhythm
8. Polymetric Rhythm

9. Bended Knee
10. Balanced Asymmetry
11. Layers of Movement
12. Stylized Instability
13. Akimbo / Angularity
14. Akimbo / Angularity
15. Polymetric Rhythm
16. Akimbo / Angularity



15



16



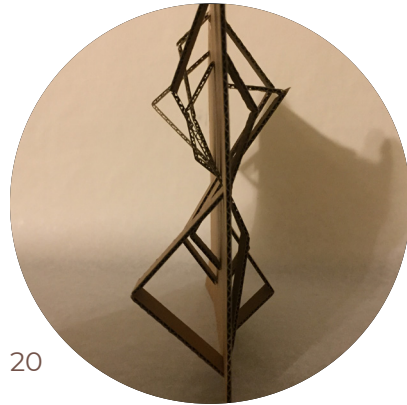
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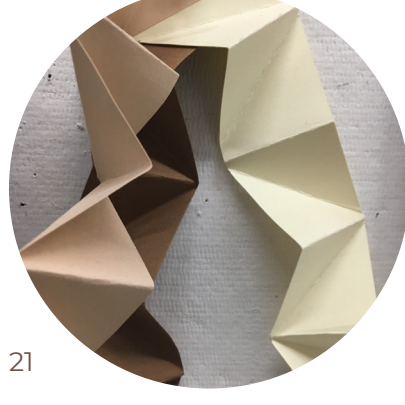
18



19



20



21



22

- 17. Bended
- 18. Polycentric Rhythm
- 19. Akimbo / Angularity
- 20. Akimbo / Angularity
- 21. Bended
- 22. Polymetric Rhythm

TYPICAL DANCE FORMATIONS



Teach And
Learn



Call And
Response



Circle or
"Ciphers"



Half - Circle or
Drum to Dance



Line
Formations

FINAL CONCEPT STATEMENT

African dance is unlike any other form of dance. It's relationship to music, is primarily what distinguishes it from any other art form.²

West African dance commonly occurs in the bantaba, or the dancing ground, which is regarded as a sacred space. Bantaba also means celebration, dancing circle or drumming circle. It's a place in which the community comes together and life is celebrated. In some West African cultures, the drum circle, or bantaba, is a place to celebrate birth, death and other milestones.³

The project celebrates the relationship between African dance and music, its dance forms, and its circle or bantaba formation. There is a critical relationship between African dance and the drum - the dance cannot exist without the drum. This relationship is expressed in the building's circulation. The drum is the physical core of the building and spans all levels, allowing sound to travel through the building. The shapes of the spaces reflect and support the circle or bantaba formations.

OTHER CONCEPTUAL DRIVERS

AKIMBO / ANGULARITY
Angular forms, bended limbs (or akimbo) and suppleness are essential to the dance forms. Angles are dynamic and equated with life and communicate beauty, vitality and strength.¹

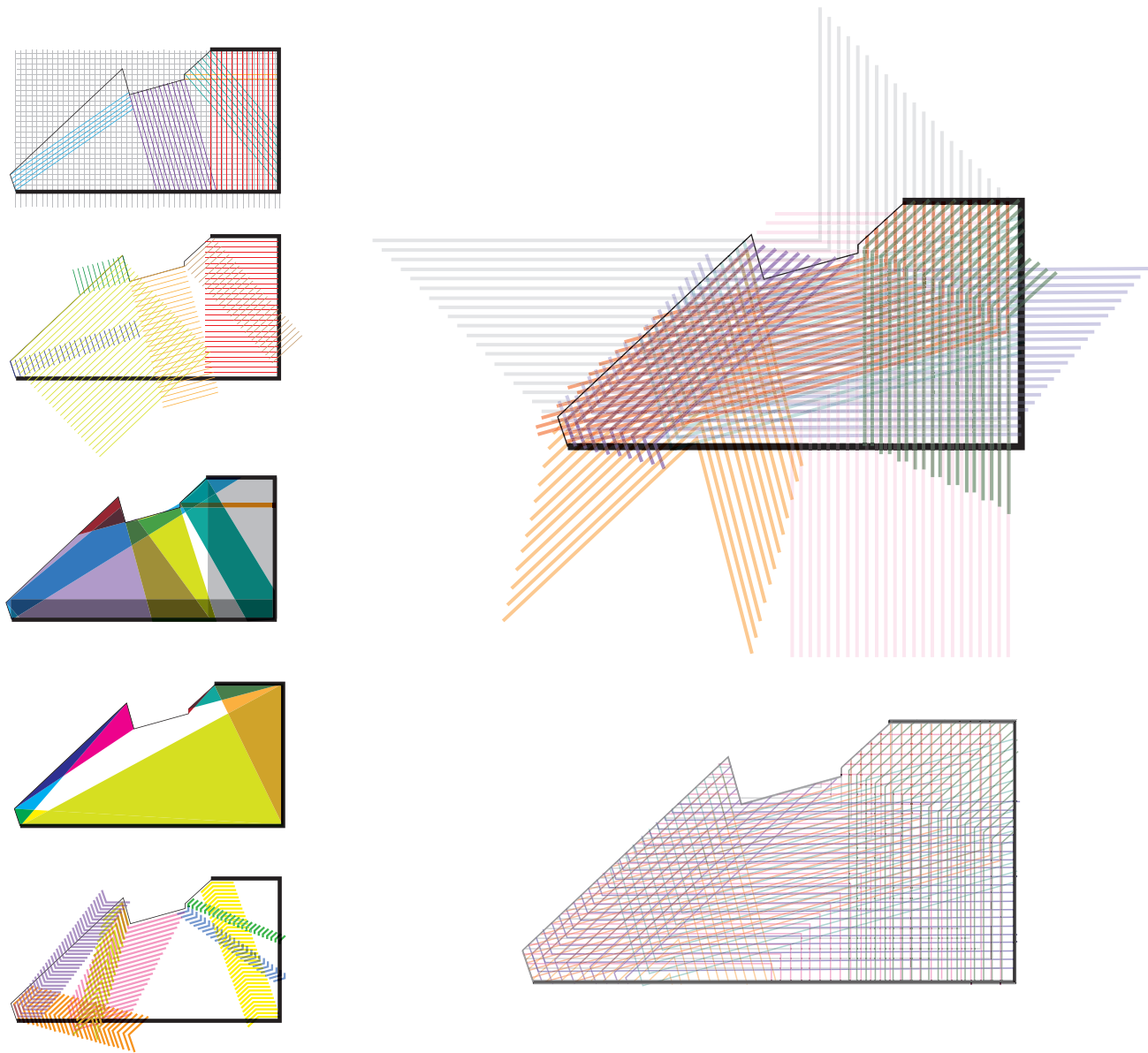
POLYMETRIC RHYTHM
Simultaneous use of different rhythms.¹

POLYCENTRICISM
Two or more centers of movement (or body parts) activated simultaneously.¹

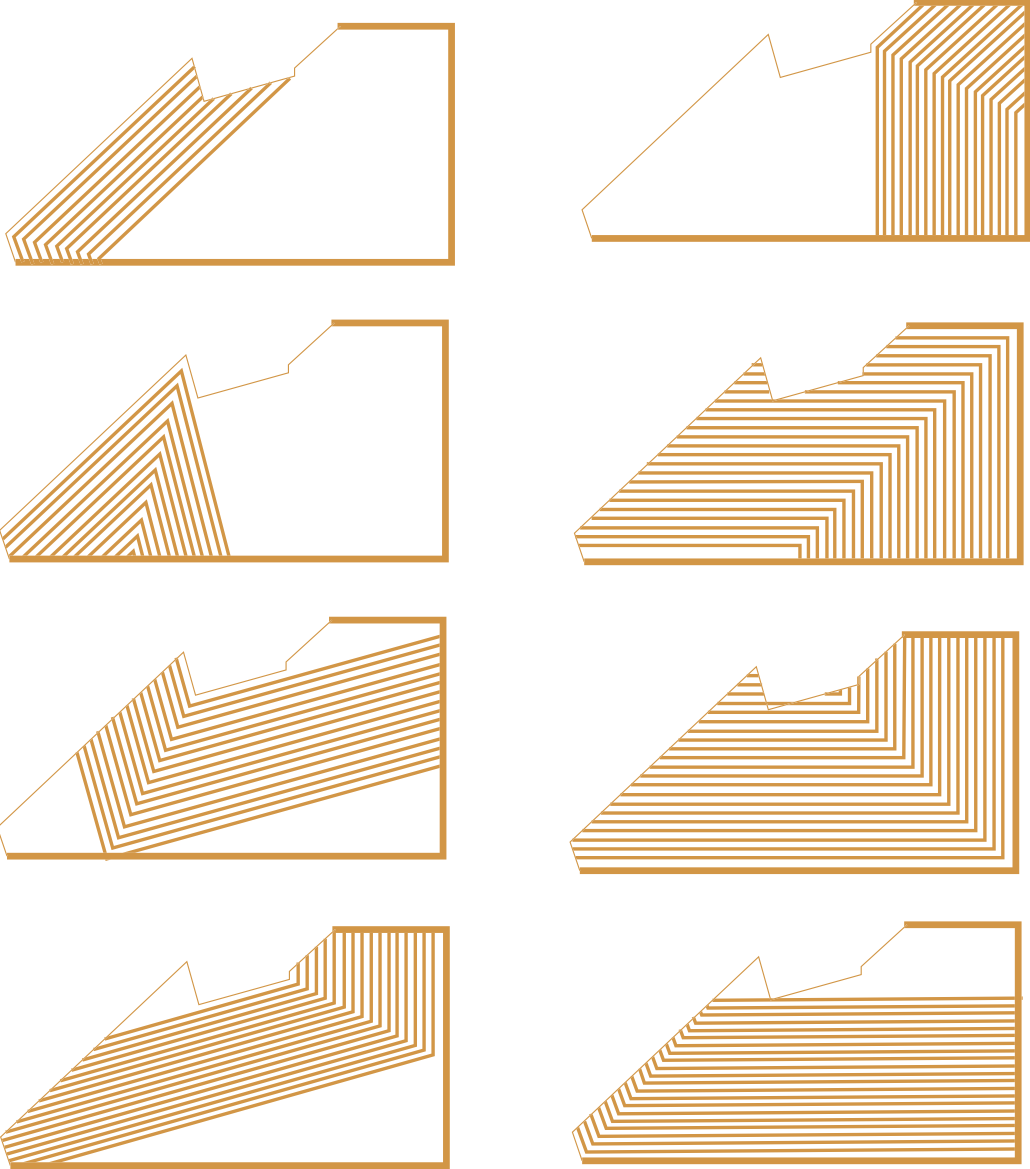
GROUNDEDNESS
Rootedness in physical space, with the body taking its orientation from the ground.¹

1. Luana. (2018). What makes that Black?: The African-American aesthetic in American expressive culture. United States: Luana Luana.
2..Welsh-Asante, K. (1996). African dance : An artistic, historical, and philosophical inquiry . Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
3. <https://plexus.org/chalkboard/@salon/messages/264.html>

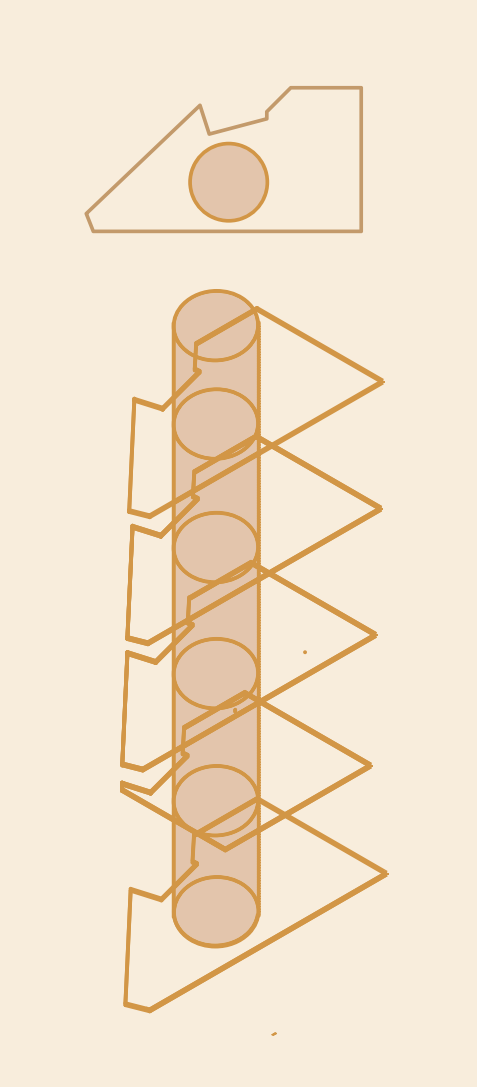
ANGLE STUDIES



Marrying the conceptual driver of akimbo or angularity, this study explores the many angles of the building's plan. This study later informs acoustical and lighting design in the project.

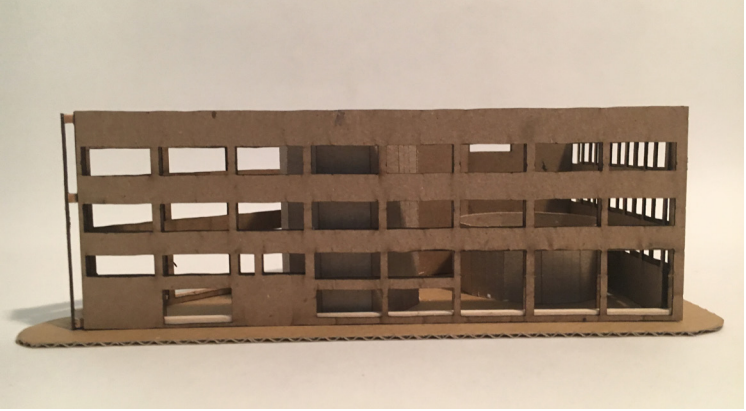
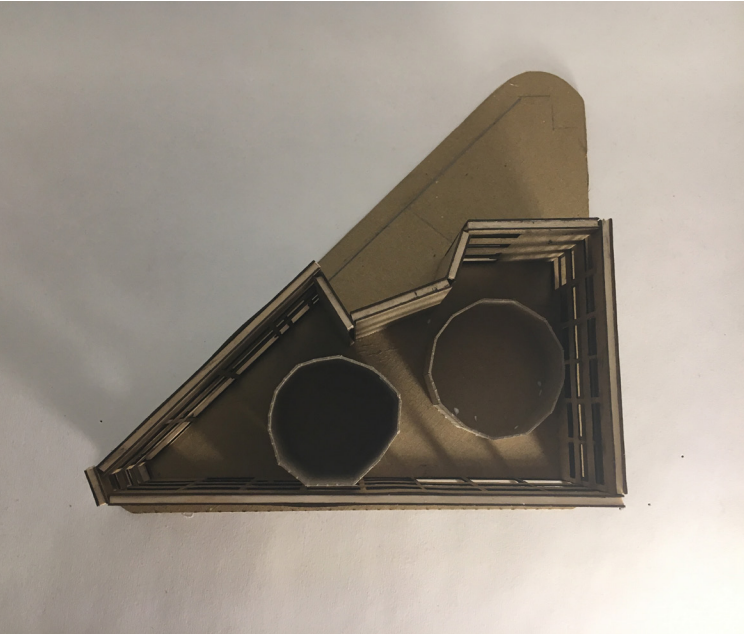


PROJECT PARTI



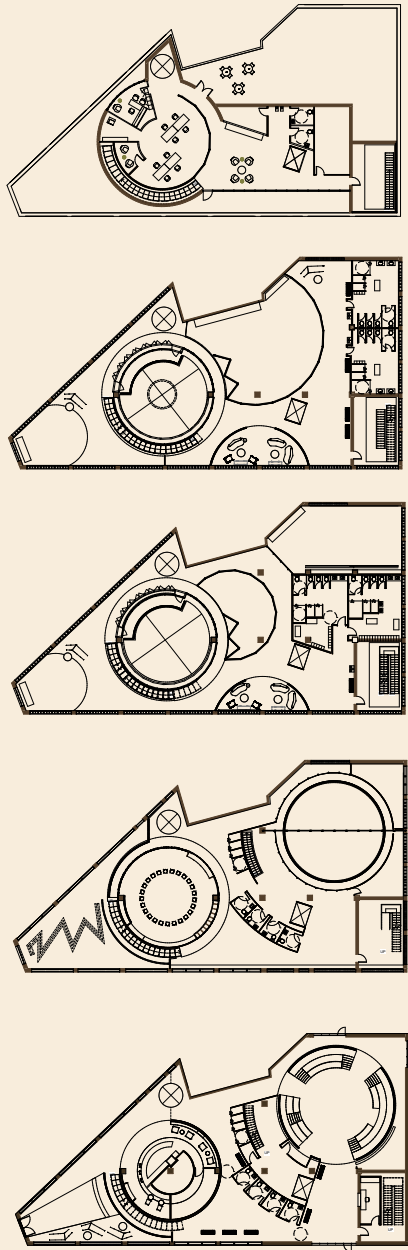
PARTI DIAGRAM

PROJECT PARTI



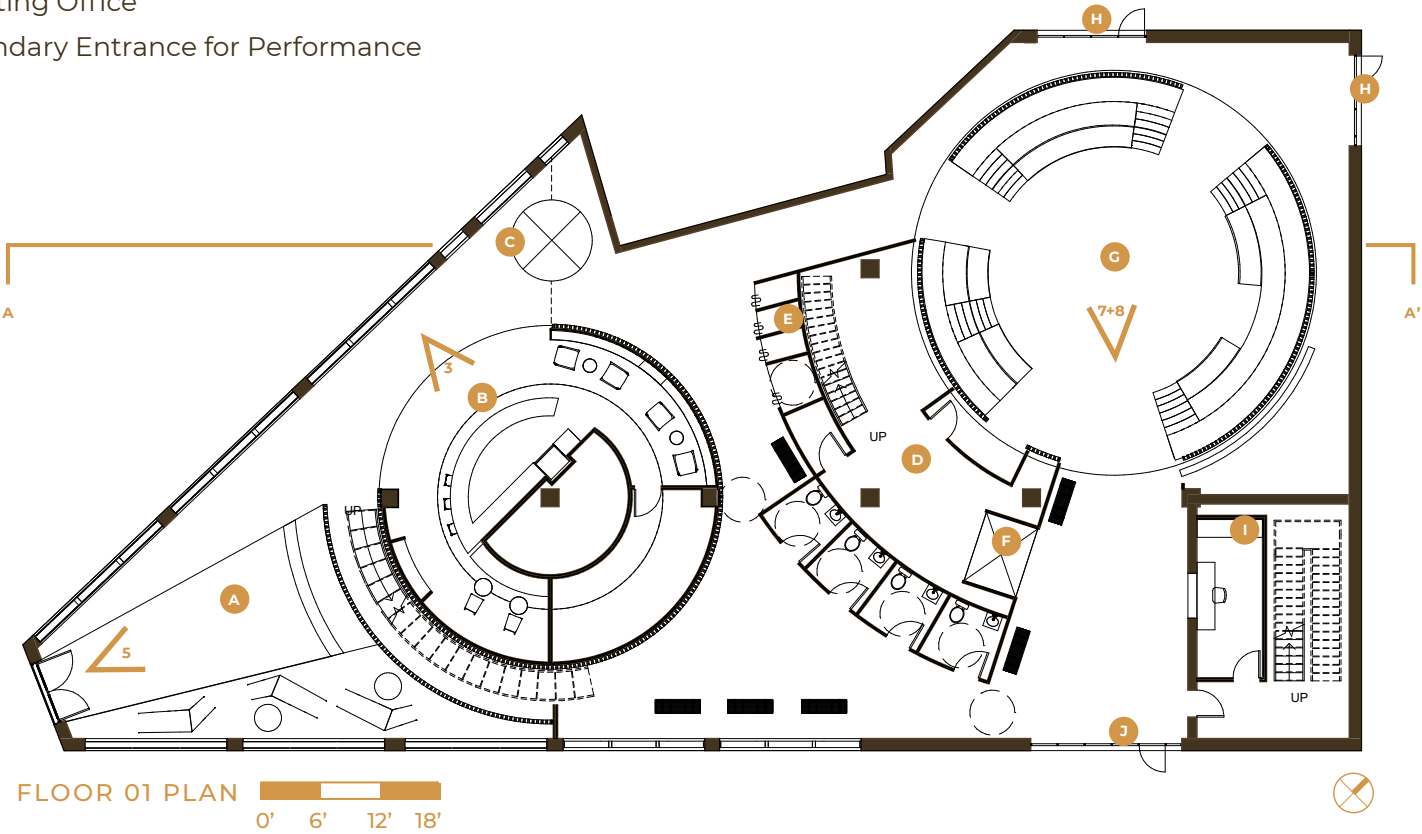
PARTI MODEL

FLOOR PLANS



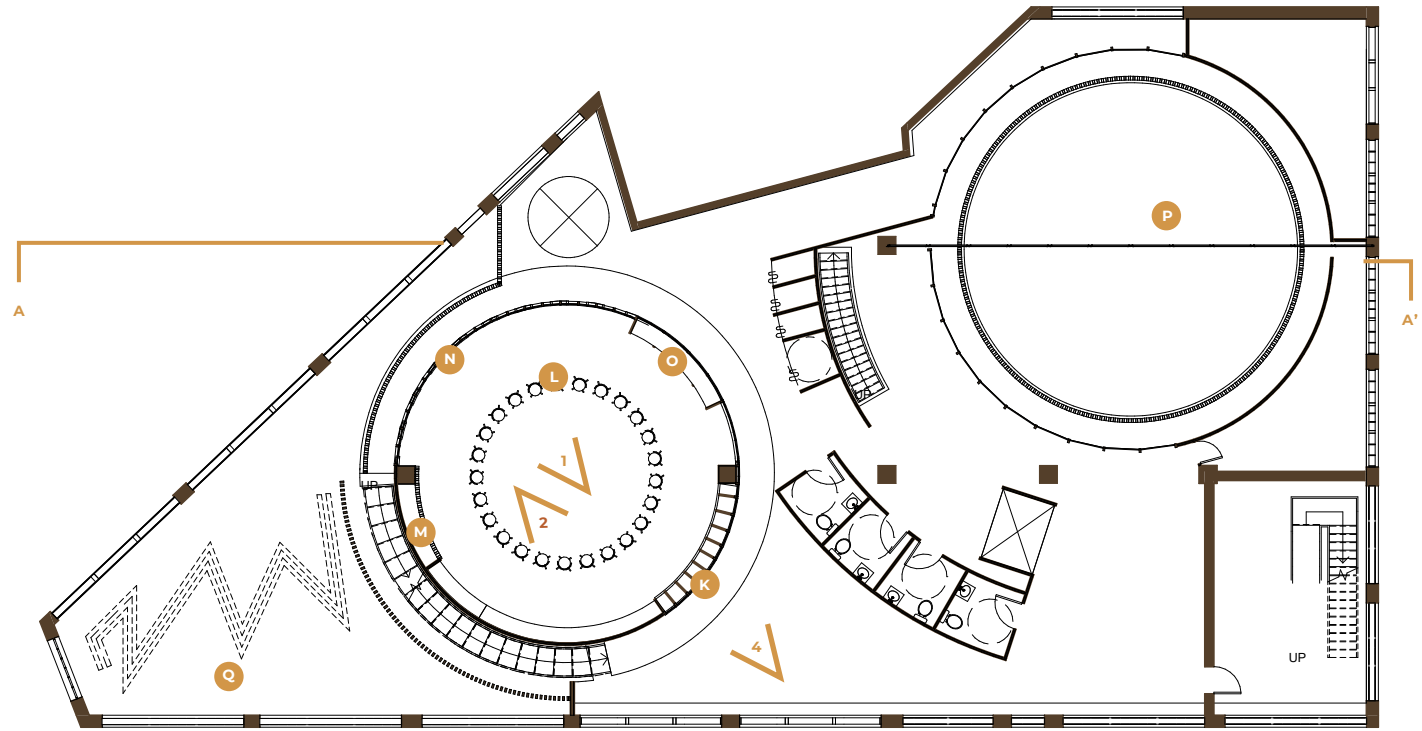
PLAN KEY

- A Lobby
- B Cafe / Snack Bar
- C Cylindrical Elevator
- D Back Stage
- E Changing Rooms
- F Elevator Servicing Back Stage + Public
- G Flexible Performance Space
- H Emergency Exits
- I Ticketing Office
- J Secondary Entrance for Performance



PLAN KEY

- K Djembe Storage + Exhibit
- L Drum Circle + Dance Studio
- M Storage for Chairs
- N Operable Windows for Sound Distribution
- O Large Drum Storage + Exhibit
- P Custom Acoustic System
- Q Custom Light Art Pendant

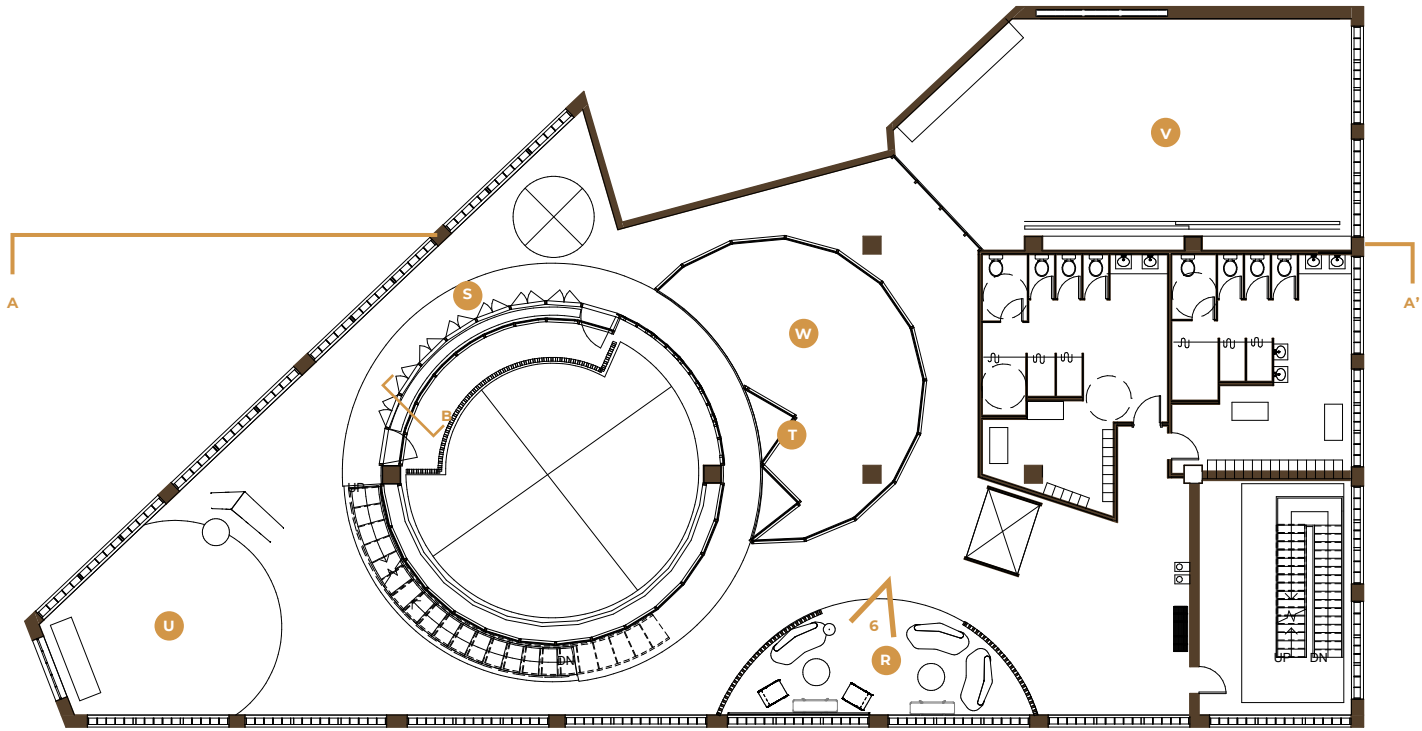


FLOOR 02 PLAN



PLAN KEY

- R Gather Space
- S Double-Sided Educational Exhibit
- T Accordion Glass Doors
- U Practice Area
- V Technique Studio

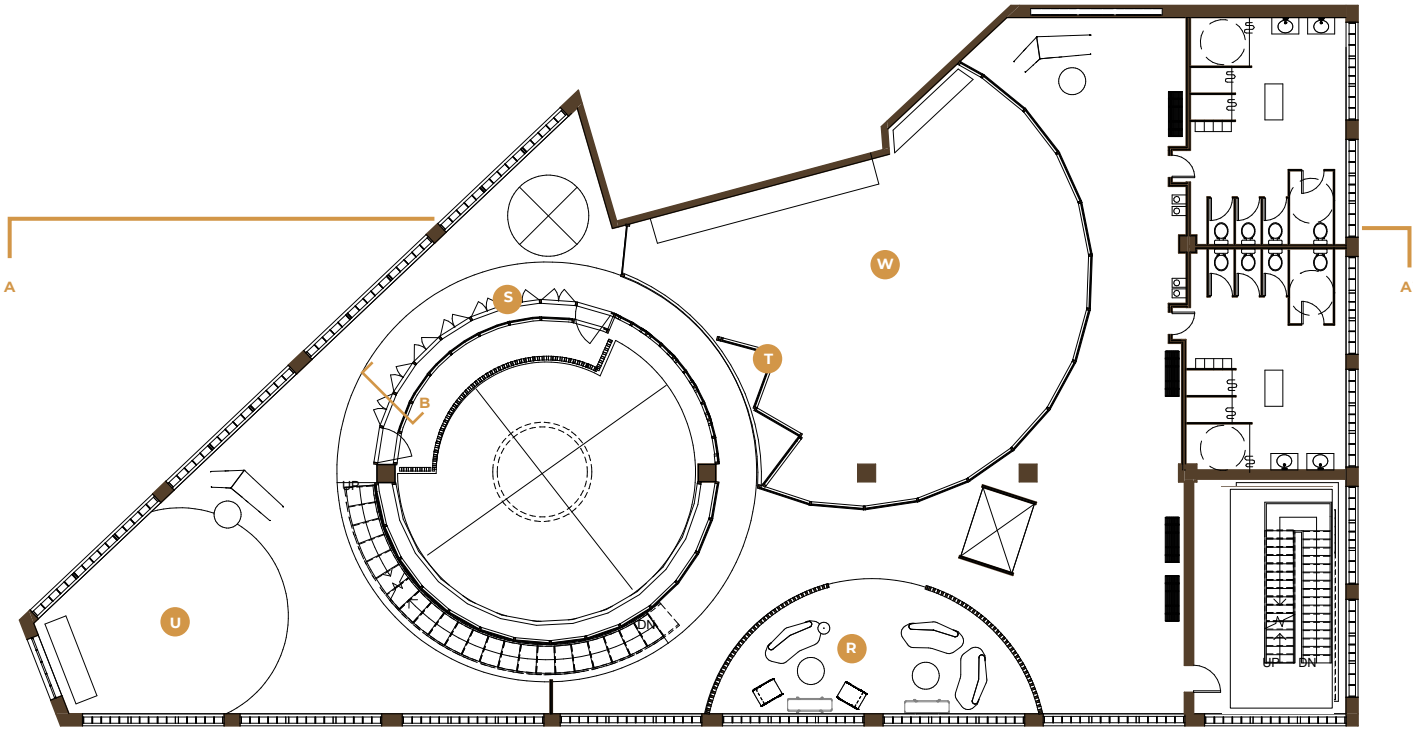


FLOOR 03 PLAN



PLAN KEY

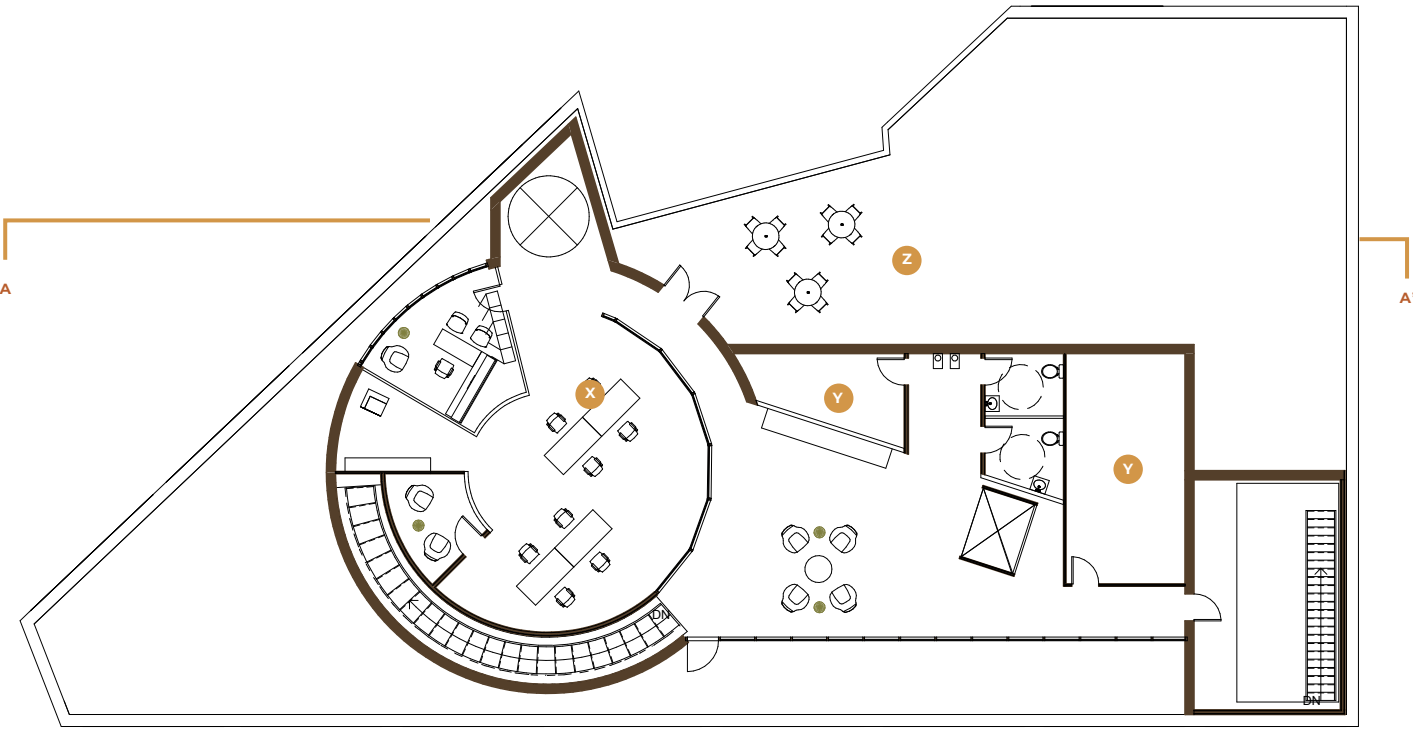
- R** Gather Space
- S** Double-Sided Educational Exhibit
- T** Accordion Glass Doors
- U** Practice Area
- W** Community Studio



FLOOR 04 PLAN
0' 6' 12' 18'

PLAN KEY

- X** Administrative Offices
- Y** Storage
- Z** Outdoor Roof Area



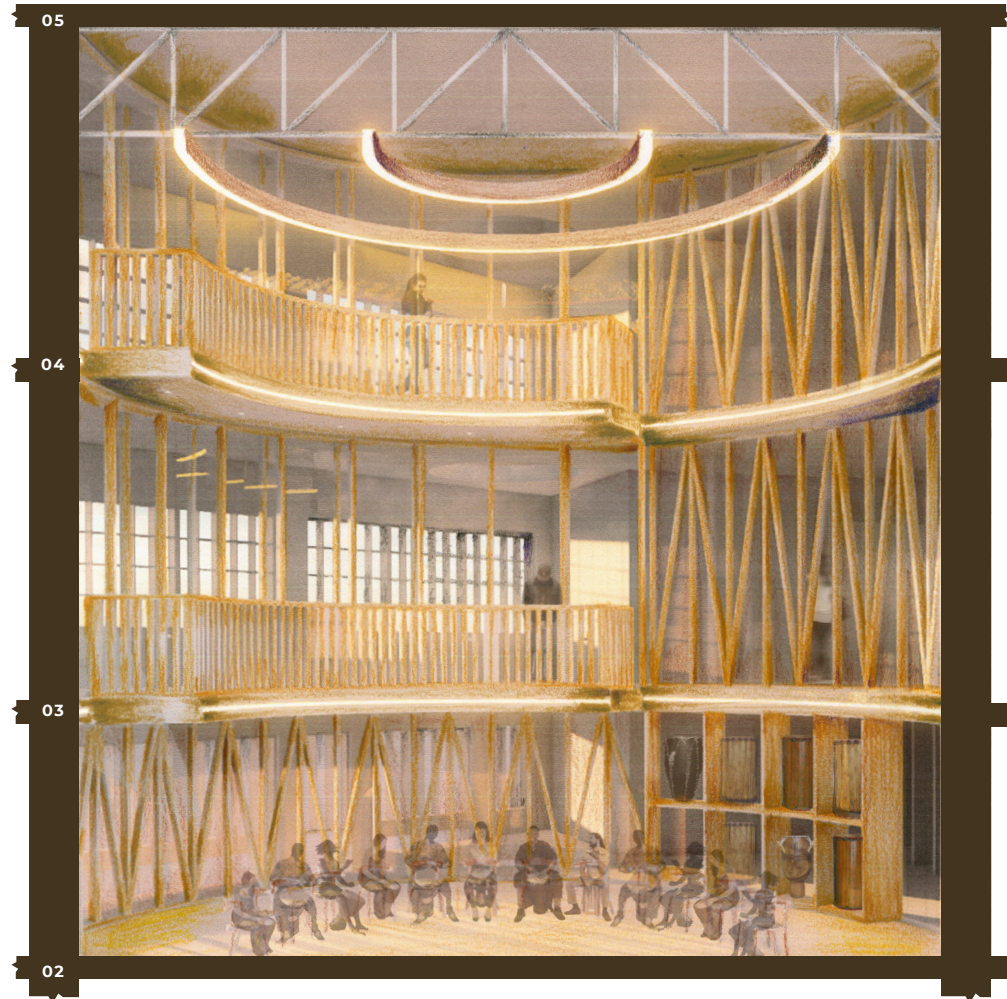
FLOOR 05 PLAN
0' 6' 12' 18'

SECTION A



0' 4' 8' 12'

DRUM + DANCE



PERSPECTIVE 1: LOOKING NORTHWEST
FLOOR 02: Drumming Circle Seating, Large Drum Storage and Operable Windows
FLOOR 03 + 04: Exhibit Space, Operable Windows
LED Strips wrap around each floor to provide ambient lighting.

Dance is the apex of African performing arts. Across 54 countries and thousands of ethnic groups, the dance and drum relationship remains a commonality. Dancing and drumming are two synonymous projections. Without the music, the dance cannot exist. (2)

Spanning three floors, the drum studio serves as the “drum of the space,” or the key organizer for the building. This formal relationship mirrors the role the drum plays in West African dance. In this space, drumming classes and dance classes take place.

The building incorporates drum storage on the interior that doubles as an informational exhibit on the exterior of the studio on floor 02. On floors 03 and 04, the general exhibit overlooks drum and dance activities below. All three levels have operable windows, for sound control.

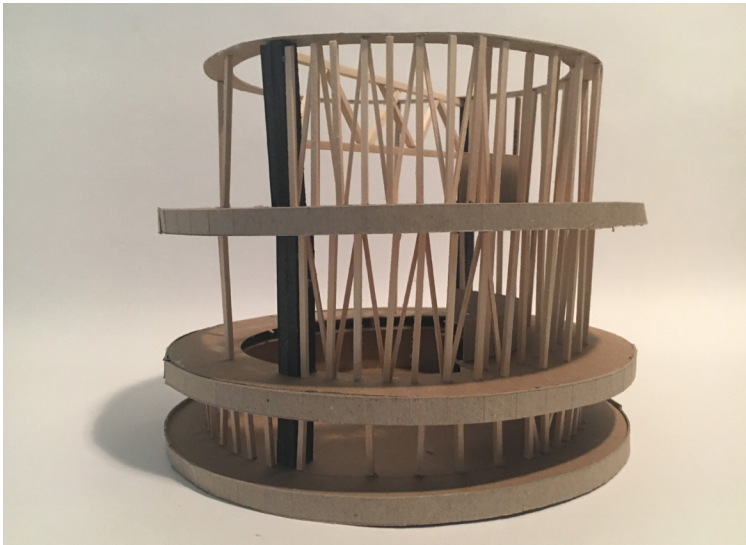


- 1. Maple Floors, Sprung Floor
- 2. Acacia- Stained Oak, Mullion System
- 3. Amber Colored Architectural Glass
- 4. Ookkuu Forms Stackable Chair
- 5. Light Art Acoustic Ring



PERSPECTIVE 2: LOOKING SOUTHEAST
FLOOR 02: Djembe Drum Storage, Instrument and Belonging Storage, Chair Storage
FLOOR 03 + 04: Circulation
LED Strips wrap around each floor to provide ambient lighting.

DRUM STUDIO MODEL



Drum studio model

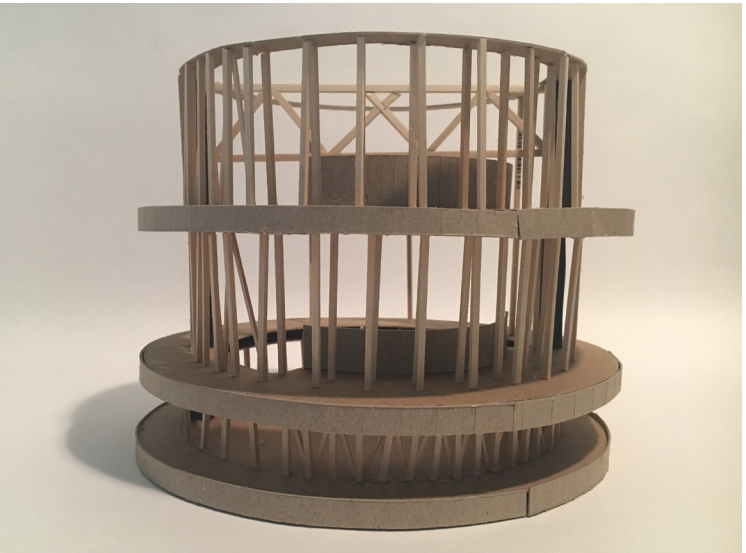


Inside of the drum studio



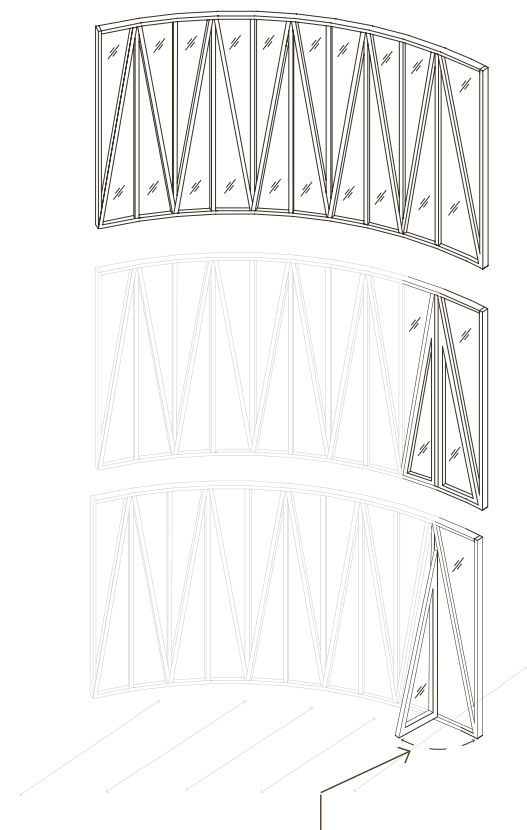
Plan view of drum studio

DRUM STUDIO MODEL



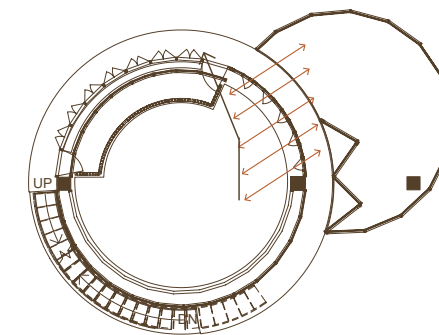
Drum studio model

“IF THE
RHYTHM
OF THE
DRUM BEAT
CHANGES, THE
DANCE STEP
MUST ADAPT.”
-KOSSI
PROVERB



Window opens to allow sound to filter throughout the building.

OPERABLE PARTITION
AXON
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



Sound travels into dance studios from the drum studio.

OPERABLE PARTITION
PLAN
SCALE: 1/16"=1'-0"

INTEGRATED SOUND

“The dance to drum [relationship] is a potent and vitalizing element of African culture.” (2) When the drummers change their beat, the dancers must also change their steps to follow the rhythm.

The operable partitions on floor 02 allow visitors to experience the faint sound of drumming, or the full sound, as preferred. These partitions open into dance studios on floors 03 and 04 to allow dancers to move to the rhythm of the drum from the drumming studio. This creates a sense of connection between spaces.

These partitions open into dance studios on floor 03 and 04 to allow dancers to dance to the rhythm of the drum from another studio, creating community and togetherness with separate classes.

EXHIBIT

THE
DJEMBE
DRUM

The djembe is one of West Africa's best known instruments. This goblet-shaped drum is traditionally carved from a single piece of African hardwood and topped with an animal skin as a drumhead. In western understanding, the drum belongs to the membranophone class of instruments in the percussion family.



EXHIBIT

An integrated exhibit, which is accessible through a spiraling wooden staircase, wraps around the drum studio on floors 02, 03, and 04. Along the staircase is a path illuminated above and below.

On floor 02, djembe drums and larger drums are displayed in a storage case that doubles as a display. The showcase is located in the drum studio.

On floors 03 and 04 lives a rotating exhibit filled with West African dance related artifacts including masks, textiles, and more. These historic artifacts are displayed in a double-sided glass case, with one side featuring a spiraling path and the other, an overlook into the drum studio below. From there, guests can become immersed in classes and practices.

Shelving for exhibit objects

Hanging mechanism for textiles

SECTION >
GENERAL
EXHIBIT +
OVERLOOK
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

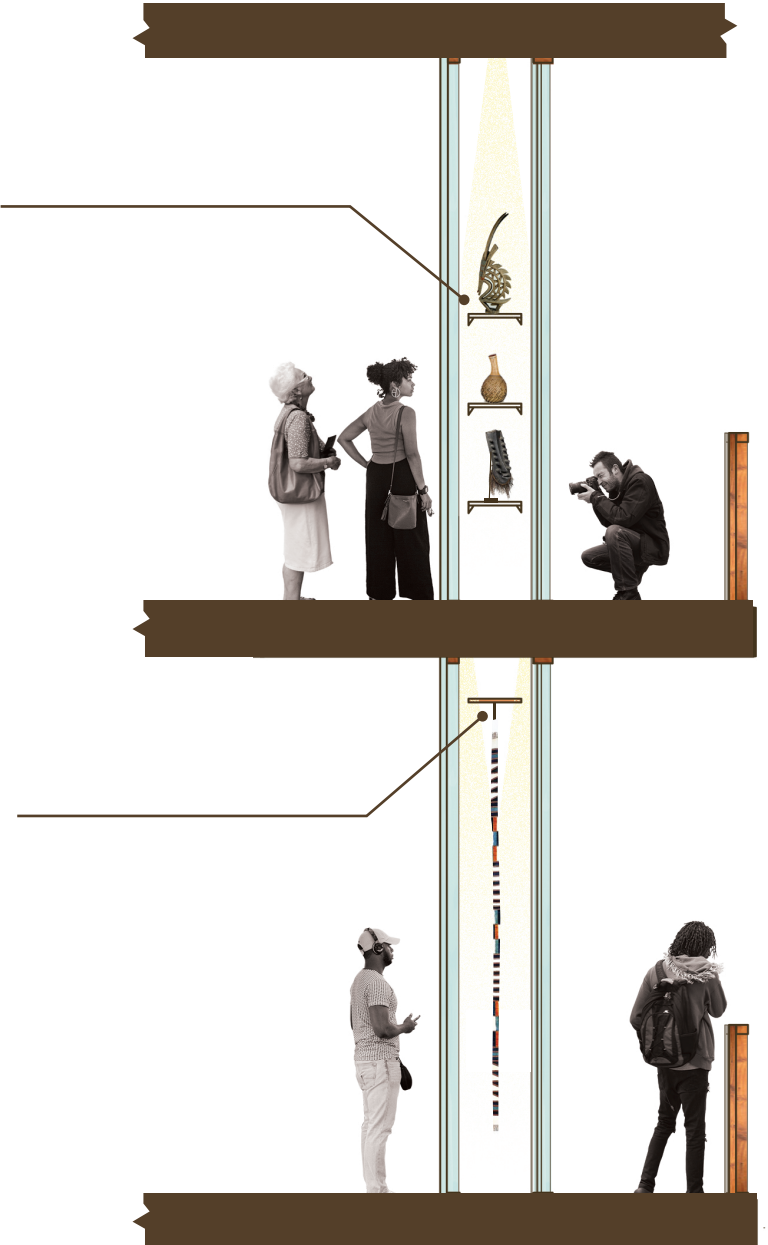
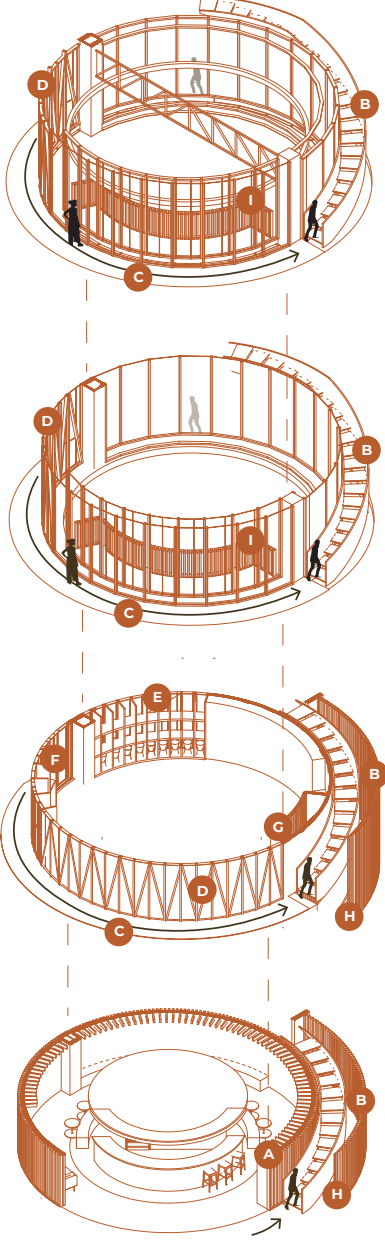


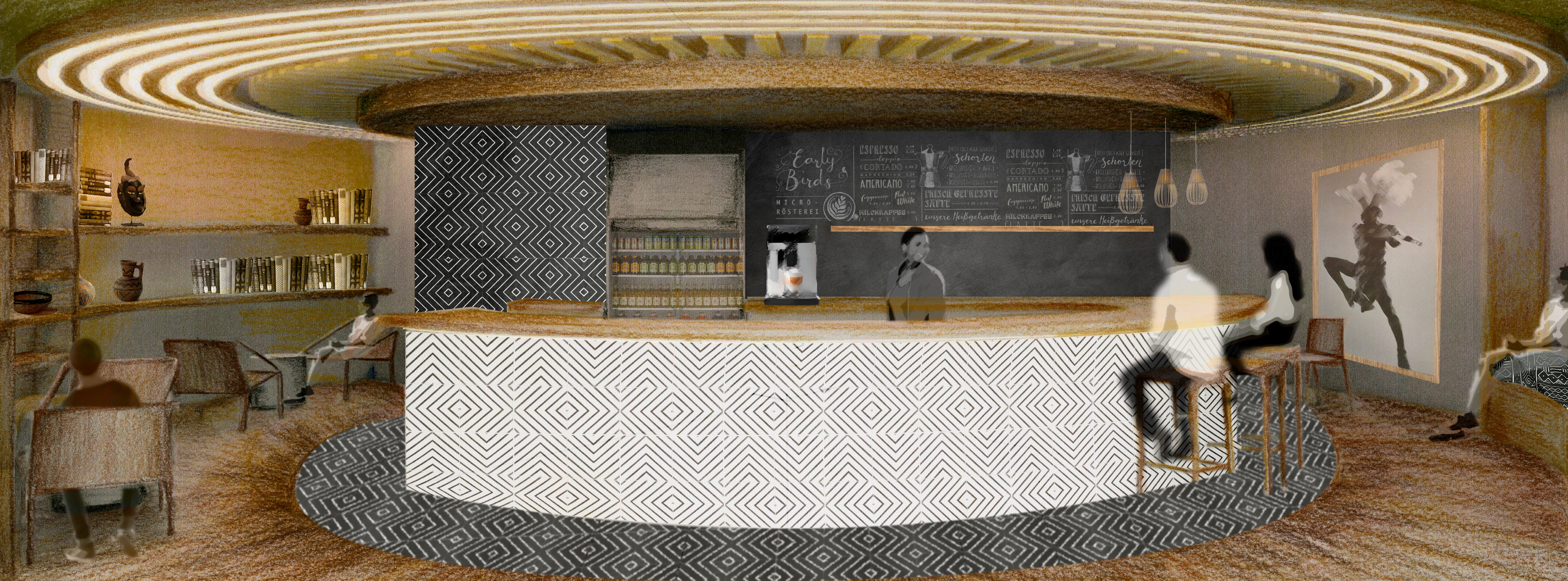
EXHIBIT AXON

AXON KEY

- A** Cafe
- B** Stairs
- C** Exhibit Circulation Path
- D** Operable Partition
- E** Djembe Drum Storage and Exhibit
- F** Large Drum Storage and Exhibit
- G** Storage for Chairs
- H** Reception Acoustic Partition
- I** General Exhibit + Overlook



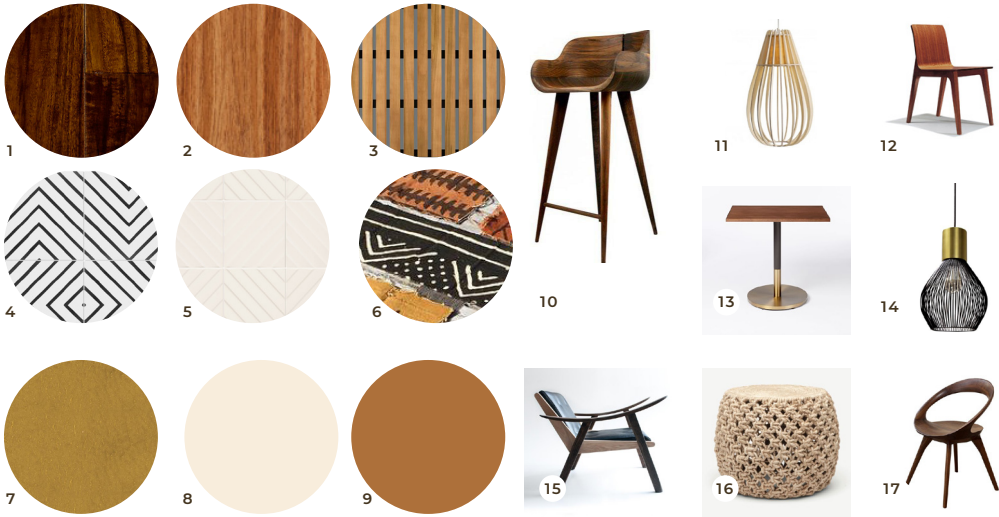
CAFE



CAFE

Located below the drum studio, on floor 01, the cafe and snack bar serves snacks, beverages and light fare for visitors, the community, class participants and performance attendees. Books line the walls providing opportunities for education about West African dance and culture.

FF&E



1. Walnut or Walnut-Stained Flooring

2. Acacia-Stained Oak, Millwork

3. Armstrong Wood Grille Acoustic

4. Labyrinth Morning Cement Field Tile by Villa Lagoon

5. 4D Tile by Walker Zanger

6. Various Mudcloth Fabric, Upholstery

7. Gilded Gold Paint by PPG

8. Safari Bisque Beige by PPG

9. Bronze Eucalyptus Paint by PPG

10. Kieren Bar Stool in Walnut by Nuevo Living
11. Wood Pendant by Phases Africa

12. Edit Chair by Bernhardt

13. Dark Walnut Bistro Table by West Elm

14. Contemporary 1-Light Pendant by Dainolite Lighting

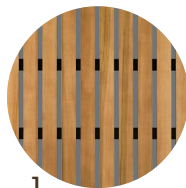
15. Tusk Occasional Armchair by Louw Roets

16. Angela Coffee Table by Made Goods

17. Anello Chair by Kiritsu Mokko



LOBBY



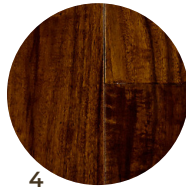
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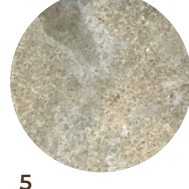
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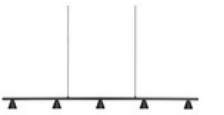
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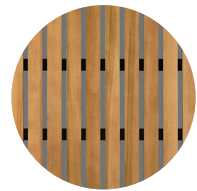


9

1. Walnut or Walnut-Stained Flooring
2. Acacia-Stained Oak, Railings
3. Hard Maple, Wax Finish
4. Safari Bisque Beige by PPG
5. Existing Concrete Floor, Polished

6. Plexwood Geometric, Wood veneer
7. Nano Seating by Ideon Design
8. Dune Linear Suspension by Kuzco Lighting
9. Brass Drum Coffee Table by France and Son

GATHER



2



5



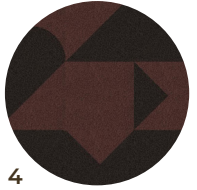
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9



4



6



8



10



11

1. Armstrong Wood Grille Acoustic
2. Safari Bisque Beige by PPG
3. Assorted Treated Mudcloth Upholstery
4. Shaw Contract Inside Shapes Impressions II
5. Bronze and Black Shade by Dainolite
6. Mudcloth Round Ottoman by Design Mix

7. Mid Century Gondola Sofa by Adrian Pearsall
8. Brass Drum Coffee Table by France & Son
9. Bookshelf by Terasso
10. Djembe Side Table by Swahili Modern
11. Fahmida Chair by Thos Moser



FLEXIBLE SPACE:
PERFORMANCE



FLEXIBLE SPACE:
COMMUNITY STUDIO

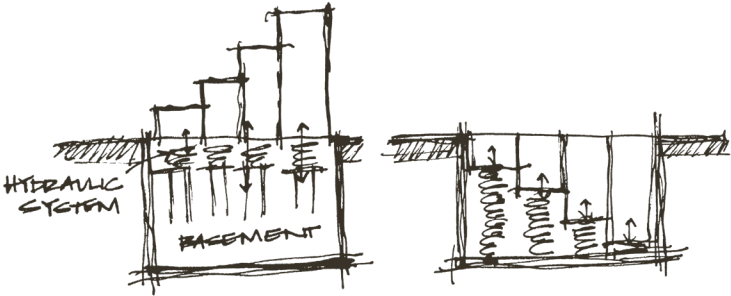
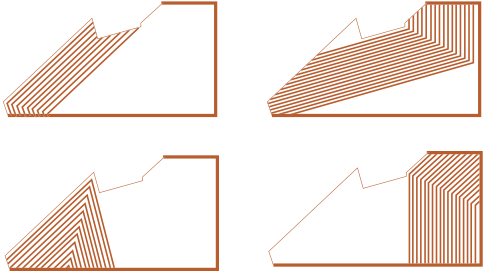


FLEXIBLE SPACE: PERFORMANCE + COMMUNITY STUDIO

The flexible multipurpose space supports West African dance forms and serves as a performance area for African dance. It is more than a theatre, it is a bantaba, in which everyone is welcome and a included in the performance. West African dance is typically done in a circle, ring or cipher formation, known as the bantaba. The space is designed to support this type of dance.

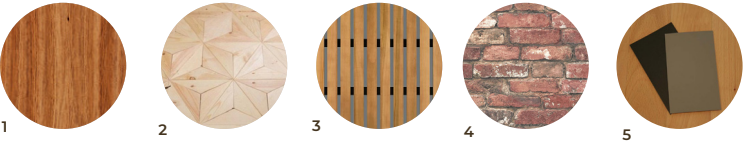
During performances, the seating is raised, allowing viewers to have an elevated experience. Alternatively, for a more economical use of the space, it is used for community classes when performances are not in session.

Concept study about the angles of the building ties in the conceptual driver akimbo, in a custom acoustic and lighting ceiling fixture, that disguises structural trust and theatre lighting equipment. >



Hydraulic bleachers, nested in the basement below, raise and lower to allow flexibility of the use of the space.

FF&E



1. Acacia-Stained Oak, Railings
2. Hard Maple, Wax Finish, Geometric Pattern
3. Armstrong Wood Grille Acoustic
4. Existing Brick
5. Marley Floor



“THE TRUEST
EXPRESSION OF A
PEOPLE IS IN ITS
DANCES AND ITS
MUSIC. BODIES
NEVER LIE.”
-AGNES DE MILLE

THANK YOU

FACULTY
ROBERTO VENTURA
CHRISTIANA LAFANZI
SARA REED
DR. ELGIE SHERROD
EMILY SMITH
CAMDEN WHITEHEAD

STUDIO COHORT
TIA GOODE
JESSICA KEEGAN
RICHARD ROZEWSKI
MAGGIE DAVIDS
ANGELINE TROILO
ABBY BARRAS

SUPPORT
MOM & DAD
FRIENDS & FAMILY

PROOFREADING
DARLENE ADEROJU

ETHOS

DESIGN CAN EITHER DIGNIFY PEOPLE,
OR DISHONOR THEM.
CHOOSE THE FORMER.

DESIGN IS MULTIDISCIPLINARY.
A DESIGNER SHOULD BE ABLE TO DESIGN A SPOON,
A CITY, AND ANYTHING
IN BETWEEN.

USERS FIRST.
DESIGN IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO WILL
EXPERIENCE IT.

USE CONTRAST.
DUALITY EXISTS FOR REASONS.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY.CONSISTENCY IS CRITICAL TO
VISUAL SUCCESS.

FIND WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IN
A PROJECT.
EMPHASIZE THAT.

PARAMETERS ARE A GIFT.
USE THEM TO INFORM DESIGN.
WORK WITH THEM NOT AGAINST THEM.

PROBLEMS ARE A DESIGNER'S
BREAD AND BUTTER.
FIND THEM. SOLVE THEM.

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¹Have You Seen an African Dance?
Poem by Jason Nkwai

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